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AMERICAN STATESMEN

IN FORTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XXXV

THE RE-UNITED NATION—GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

THOMAS B. REED

1839-1902

J. B. Reed

American Statesmen

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American Statesmen

THOMAS B. REED

BY

SAMUEL W. McCALL

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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Published December 1914

PREFACE

It is inevitable that one writing the Life of Thomas B. Reed should be drawn into a discussion of the most important questions before Congress during his long period of service; yet I have made the consideration of them entirely secondary to the recording of his course upon them, and have endeavored to permit him to present his own view in his speeches, letters, and other writings. The great questions before the country while he was in Congress were the Southern and race issues, the Greenback and silver questions, the procedure of the House (and especially obstruction), and civil-service reform and the settlement of the monetary standard. Through perhaps half of the Congresses there was a dead level of routine legislation, hardly relieved, although accompanied by the perennial discussion of the tariff. This routine, while not appealing to the imagination, presents much of importance in the development of the country and the shaping of its practical processes of government, and it cannot be neglected.

Reed was the most powerful figure in either House of Congress during his time, or at least after he had opportunity to establish himself as he did in the first few years of his service; and his contribution to the settlement of every great issue before the country was in-

fluential in a high degree. He firmly believed in protection as necessary to the prosperity of the country in peace and its independence in war. He favored reform in the civil service and was opposed to inflation, to the free coinage of silver, and to the settled policy of obstruction which for more than a century had been carried on under the rules of the House. He himself in his first Speakership overthrew that obstruction by his famous ruling; and when he had been retired to the minority and the ancient system had been restored, he himself put it in practice so aggressively as to prevent the transaction of all business and to compel his adversaries to abandon it. Ever since that time the principle of his ruling has been accepted by all parties as the law of the House.

He was an unyielding advocate of equality of rights for all citizens, and steadily maintained the principles of the Declaration of Independence. The chief reason for his retirement from the Speakership and from public life was the annexation, against his protest, of oversea territory, imposing as it did upon ourselves the necessity of violating that principle of self-government which he believed to be the foundation principle of the American Commonwealth.

In my quotations from the official reports of debates I have as a rule preserved the expressions of approval or disapproval on the part of the House, believing that they possess a real historical value. Reed, it need hardly be said, was altogether above the petty practice, which I regret to say has found some currency in the

House of Representatives, of editing the reports of his speeches by inserting "Applause" and "Laughter" in the printed version, — a practice which has made the House appear to be a very stupid sort of body, going wild with enthusiasm over eloquence the cheapest and most fustian, and convulsed with "laughter" over jokes the point of which years of subsequent study have failed to disclose. Indeed Reed had the reputation of not even revising the reporter's notes in order to correct the little slips and errors that will inevitably creep into reports of speeches made in a body like the House.

Mrs. Reed and her daughter Katherine Reed Balentine have placed me under very great obligation by giving me free access to the family papers, and in other ways. I am also much indebted to Reed's son-in-law, Captain Arthur T. Balentine. Honorable Asher C. Hinds, who was Reed's close friend, and his parliamentary clerk, and who now represents the Portland district in Congress, has given me much help in many ways, especially by advice and by putting his wide and valuable collection of material at my disposal.

SAMUEL W. MCCALL.

WINCHESTER, MASS.,
November 6, 1914.

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THE LIFE OF THOMAS BRACKETT REED

THE LIFE OF THOMAS BRACKETT REED

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

Thomas Brackett Reed was born in Portland, Maine, October 18, 1839. He does not appear to have given himself any special concern about the character of his remote ancestors, apparently thinking that, whether they were good or bad, it was beyond his power to change them, and accepting the responsibility of making the most of himself as he happened to be, without regard to their faults or virtues. His utterances upon the subject were usually in a light vein and are consistent with a mild indifference toward ancestor-worship as an established form of religion. In a little speech which he made in 1902, at the centennial of the town of York, he said that his ancestors came from York. He had hard work to discover, he said, that they ever existed, and certainly they held no position of great emolument, judging from his own financial condition when he arrived. He was interested in the report that one of his great-grandmothers had lived to the age of one hundred and thirteen years, and took pains to verify it. Evidently referring to Lydia Weare

Reed, the mother of his grandfather Joseph Reed, he wrote in a letter dated September 19, 1883: "I discovered that she lived in Eliot — but died in the prime of life at ninety-eight. I found that she was the great-granddaughter of Peter Weare, known as a stout citizen of York in the days when the Indians made the block-houses much sought after by the judicious."

But Reed's ancestors were of sterling stock in every line. They were identified with the important colonizations of New England from the times when they were first planted. His original ancestor in this country, of the name of Reed, — or rather Reade, as the form of the name then was, — was born in England. The historian of the Reade family in America indulges in the conjecture that this ancestor was the son of Sir Thomas and Mary Cornwall Reade of Brocket Hall, Hertfordshire. In 1630, while he was yet a young boy, he came to America in the great fleet with Governor Winthrop, and settled in Salem. This boy, named Thomas Reade, grew up to be a man of considerable importance in Salem, where he purchased a large tract of land, and to this possession he added three hundred acres which he acquired near Cape Prosper in 1662. He also rejoiced in the title of "Colonel," which, however, then as now, may have been compatible with pursuits entirely peaceful on the part of its possessor.

Jacob Reed, the son of this Thomas, moved to Kittery, Maine, but afterwards returned to Salem. All of Reed's ancestors of his name, succeeding Jacob, were identified with Maine. His grandfather, Joseph Reed,

to whom reference has already been made, was born in York in 1770, and reached the age of eighty-two years. Joseph married Mary Brackett, who was a descendant in the fifth generation from the real founder of the Colony, George Cleve. Mary Brackett inherited a considerable property, and this, with the proceeds from the sale of some farms owned by her husband, supported them in comfort in their old age. She survived her husband about eight years and attained the age of eighty-four. The records of the Reed and Brackett families show a high mortality on account of the Indian wars. Those not killed by the Indians usually lived to a great age.

Among the children of this union was Reed's father, for whom he was named, Thomas Brackett Reed, born in 1803. Reed's father married for a second wife, Mathilda Mitchell, who is described as a woman of much intelligence and beauty and of a deeply religious nature, known for her charitable deeds. Reed was the first child of this marriage. It was from his mother that he inherited his good looks. Mathilda was descended from Experience Mitchell, who landed at Plymouth in 1623, and who married Jane Cook, one of the company of the Mayflower. Thus there was blended in Reed the blood of the Pilgrim and the Puritan.

Others of his ancestral lines led directly to those who had mastered most incredible difficulties and laid the foundations of Maine.

The Portland Colony, the Province of Lygonia as it was called, was really established by George Cleve.

Reed said of Cleve in his speech at the Portland Centennial, in 1886, that where he "was born, where he lived before he came from England, or where his bones now rest, no one of his unnumbered descendants knows to-day." But there is no obscurity about the masterful way in which Cleve bore himself when he first landed in 1632, and later for nearly a score of years during which he remained the master-spirit of the Province and during a portion of the time was its Governor. By tact and diplomacy he maintained himself against powerful antagonists both in England and America, and, as Reed declared, "His enemies were never victorious except in his extreme old age."

It was one of the most statesman-like achievements of Cleve that he secured from Sir Ferdinando Gorges the approval of a plan for the union of New England which would probably have permanently joined New Hampshire and Maine to Massachusetts. Some interesting history was spoiled in the making when Winthrop refused to accept the plan. But the long-slumbering claim of Massachusetts to Maine was at last sternly asserted, and the little colony had no alternative but to submit. In 1652 the Commissioners of Massachusetts Bay came to York and declared that Massachusetts thenceforth was to govern Maine. A cage, a whipping-post, a ducking-stool, and a pair of stocks, were set up as the awful emblems of the new authority. It is profitless to speculate upon what might have happened had Winthrop accepted the plan proposed by Cleve. But it was destined again to

be shown that force is not the most enduring basis of union. Whether it was that the blood of the Commonwealth did not surge warmly across the narrow strip of New Hampshire which separated her from her province, and that she regarded the latter with something of a stepmother's love, or whether the memory of the early conflict lingered and Maine never quite regarded herself as an integral part of Massachusetts, the connection asserted with a threat of force in those early times did not prove to be permanent.[1]

The settlements at Plymouth and Salem and that upon the shores of Casco Bay were made by the same race. While the Maine colony is the least known to fame, yet in the genius for colonization and for establishing orderly government in the wilderness, and in the heroism with which it encountered danger, it was quite the equal of either of the other two. Instead of running generally to the north and south as at Salem and Plymouth, the seacoast upon which George Cleve planted the Portland Colony spreads more nearly from east to west. Thus the cold, great enough where the colonists raised their first habitations, increased as they moved inland. They were shut in on the one side by the ocean and on the other by the almost impenetrable forest which stretched to the settlements about Quebec. For the possession of the forest they were compelled to contend, not merely against the extreme cold but against the French and the Indians. Indeed,

[1] See James G. Blaine's speech in the Senate, January 22, 1878, on the presentation of the statue of William King.

the latter disputed with them the right to inhabit even the narrow strip of land along the sea, and more than once during the first century of its existence, Portland was ravaged by fire, the greater number of its inhabitants captured or tomahawked, and the settlement almost obliterated. But the colony persisted, steadily grew, and finally developed into a state exercising a potential influence in the government of the nation.

Through his mother Reed was descended from the Wares and the Buchnams, who rendered important service and some of whom were killed in the Indian wars. Another ancestor was with Paul Jones in that most brilliant of all sea-fights, in which the Serapis was captured.

It is, I imagine, more profitable to consider the general circumstances or characteristics of a colony or a race than to find here and there in an ancestry some notable achievement by an individual. History moving upon a high moral and heroic level, like that of the Pilgrims, and of the Puritan and Portland settlements, will inevitably flower out in the production of splendid names. There is commonly more or less of accident to individual fame, and in its making, environment, opportunity, and chance play a great part. The appearance of the deed itself is often deceptive and in its achievement unknown heroes may have had a greater share than the one with whose name it is especially identified. But where a small community of men are undaunted by extreme hardships, where they persist in maintaining themselves although surrounded by

grave dangers, where difficulties are so oppressive that each man must show himself of the heroic texture of the state itself, and where, under most adverse conditions, they display a devotion to liberty and to the orderly sway of law, and keep their little commonwealth upon a lofty plane, — from such fertile soil men are likely to spring fitted to contend with the gravest crises which may come upon a nation.

The father of Reed, like his father before him, followed the sea. He was a deep-sea sailor, served as mate upon several ships in the coasting trade, and was afterwards the captain of various packets, plying between Boston and the Maine coast. Of one of them, the Frances, he was apparently the owner. He was fairly well-to-do, although he does not seem to have accumulated much property. The house in which his son was born, and which may yet be seen only a few paces from the Longfellow house, would indicate some degree of prosperity. He had a happy faculty for telling stories and he used to employ it to the delight of the children.[1] Reed and his father were upon excellent terms and appeared to be boon companions. The

[1] Hon. Amos L. Allen, who was secretary to Reed during his speakership and afterwards succeeded him in Congress, is my authority for the following: One day when Reed was Speaker there arrived a picture of the house in which he was born. "That is a pretty good-looking house to be born in," Mr. Allen said to him. To which Reed replied, "But I was n't born in the whole house, Amos; I was only born in that end of it "; alluding to the fact that the house had had an addition at one of the ends. "Well, that end of it would be a good-looking house to be born in," persisted Mr. Allen. "But I was n't born in the whole end of it, Amos," said the Speaker, "I was only born in two or three of the upper rooms."

father proved his devotion to his son by mortgaging his house to send him to college.

The Portland of the time of Reed's birth was a small city with a population of about fifteen thousand people. It had maintained a slow but steady growth, and the increase it received from outside its own limits came chiefly from the other portions of Maine. The intelligence of its people had given it a standing among American cities quite out of keeping with their number — a distinction which it still enjoys. At the time of Reed's boyhood there was probably no other city in the world more purely of British stock.

The boys of Portland in Reed's youth apparently led a rather strenuous life. Writing of those of a somewhat later time, he said: "Boys do not do much of anything nowadays. They are much more comfortable to get along with. Now they are civilized, but they have lost much on the score of picturesqueness. — Doubtless there are still gleams of old-time savagery, which lighten up the home circle and cheer the hearts of mothers, but the boy as a public institution no longer thrills the heart and engrosses the mind." He classified the boys of his day as the "Brackett Street boys," the "Center-Streeters, and on the banks of Back Cove dwelt the Christian Shorers. — Beyond them, in the unknown regions about Munjoy Hill, were savage and warlike tribes of whom we did not even know the names." In the good old days one "could as easily have marched to the Pacific coast as from Brackett Street to Munjoy Hill." And then follows

an account of the ambuscades and feuds between "the tribes."

The Fourth of July was the one day of the year given over to the boy. "All other days in the year he took a back seat, cowered in the darkness, or did his deeds of disorder behind fences or haystacks or in barns or sheds; but on the Fourth of July he came out openly and flouted the good citizens. — What guns we used to use and what pistols! No boy to-day who loves life would dare to hold one in his hands unloaded. — My first celebration cost my father five cents. It does n't really seem much. But in those earlier and better days of the Republic thirst could be slaked several times at the fountain of root-beer, and the boy with five cents could buy round cakes two for a cent, and see the big boys touch off crackers, and once in a while a great big boy, some princely fellow, would even let you pop off one of his all by yourself and for nothing. Ten of them could be bought for a cent. The only trouble was, which wild extravagance was to be indulged in. No five-cent boy could have them all."

Reed's early education was obtained in the Portland schools, and chiefly in the Boys' High School, which was a very good institution and gave its students a thorough preparation for college. The head of the school, Master Lyford, was a remarkable teacher, judging from the testimony of very eminent men who had been his pupils. Many years after his Portland school days Reed wrote a letter to Lyford in which he paid this tribute to his old teacher: —

That I was for five and a half years under your charge when you were master of the Boys' High School, I have long thought the greatest good fortune of my life. — My experience under other teachers and as a teacher myself has increased the admiration with which I remember by what means you reduced a hundred turbulent boys to the most systematic, thoroughly governed school which I ever saw or of which I ever read. At a time when corporal punishment was the standby of the best masters, you accomplished your work without a single blow, by sheer force of character. If a boy had honor or ambition in him, you knew how to make successful appeal to it. While you had accomplished assistants, it was the universal sentiment that no explanations were ever so clear and luminous as yours. You made us understand. You never let us go away with half knowledge. I do not believe that any hundred boys in the world ever did so much work, the results of which [persevered?] as did the boys of the High School when you were master.

I am glad to have a chance to say this to you; for while we have hardly met for all these years, I have long cherished an esteem for you of which what I have written is only a slight expression.

At the beginning of his course in the High School Reed seems to have shown the indifference to study which was to be expected of a young and fast-growing boy, but one of his classmates, who afterwards won distinction, speaks of the time when Reed "seemed to awake from his listlessness as from a dream. From that time on he never wasted a minute, but mastered thoroughly everything that was set for him to do."[1]

Although the instruction was excellent the school was badly housed. One of Reed's schoolboy compositions, probably written when he was fifteen years old,

[1] Letter of Joseph W. Symonds.

denounced the building as "a disgrace to the city," and presented a plea for a new one. "The great triumph of the building," he declared, was its apparatus for heating. The larger room had but one stove which was in a corner near the entrance, "so that being a good boy and getting a 'back seat' was after all a dangerous honor," conferring as it did the privilege of freezing. But it was different in the classrooms. Each of them contained "one of those excellent inventions called air-tight stoves. If it was heated everyone roasted; if the fire was suffered to go out, everyone froze. And so, day after day, the boys alternated between heat and cold like a parcel of condemned spirits on board one of Whiston's third-class comets." Conditions were not improved by a fire which destroyed part of the building for, the essay continued, "during the last five weeks the school has been located in a small inconvenient room, just spacious enough for the business of the clerk of courts." The pupils were compelled to sit crowded upon benches and without desks. "If they changed their position, they were brought in close contact with the boys next to them, which position is to the average boy a temptation perfectly irresistible."

He conducted a small school paper, published only in his own handwriting and called "The Northern Light, Brighter and Brighter." His editorials covered a wide field, dealing as they did with the problems of the present and the future. They did not neglect the subject of schoolboy manners. One of the papers

criticized the behavior of a fellow student in attempting a joke at the expense of a teacher. The subjects of some of his essays at this period were "Napoleon Bonaparte," "Benedict Arnold," "Elijah on Horeb," and "Faith as an unconscious argument." He extolled Napoleon "in the mere worldly point of view," as "the greatest man in all points that ever rose or towered or fell." Of Arnold, he asked, "For why may we not as well think of Arnold the hero as of Arnold the traitor?" But under this sentiment is written in the hand of his mature years, "Painful result of reading George Lippard." His essays did not differ much from the usual schoolboy performances except that they attained at times a form remarkable in a writer of his years, and displayed a fondness and an aptitude for serious discussion. He does not appear to have written at that time upon the politics of the day, but that he was interested in the subject is shown by a political canvass of some of the boys of the school written by his own hand upon the back of one of his compositions. Five of the boys were recorded for Buchanan and seventeen for Frémont, and on the roll of the latter was Reed's name. Thus at that early age, and in its first national campaign, he is seen to have been in sympathy with the party of which he remained a member during all the remainder of his life. That he took a keen interest in politics at that time will appear also from the following written by him of the Frémont campaign: —

> One of the pleasantest of my early recollections is the great gathering of political speakers in Maine during the cam-

paign in 1856. Eloquence was very cheap in Maine that year. We had Howell Cobb and Judah P. Benjamin, Ben Wade and N. P. Banks. It was in Deering Hall in Portland, Maine, that Banks made the famous "Union Slide Speech," which afterwards caused him so much trouble and so very nearly cost him the Speakership. Banks that day was in the prime of vigor and personal comeliness. Dressed in blue, with closely buttoned coat, his well-chosen language, his graceful figure and gesture, and his aggressive way carried with him the whole audience; and when he declared that if the country was to be ruled in the interest of slavery he was ready to let the Union slide, the huge round of applause made it clear that the audience and the occasion were both with him. He was a member of the 45th Congress, but how changed!

CHAPTER II

COLLEGE

Reed was very well fitted for college. During his preparation he made substantial acquirements in the classics, for the study of which his mind had a natural bent. He used afterwards to speak of the ease with which his thorough preparation enabled him to take the first years of the college course. Having successfully passed the examinations he was admitted to Bowdoin, August 28, 1856. His class contained fifty-eight Freshmen, of whom he was almost the youngest. It was the largest class that had ever entered the college. The requirements for admission in mathematics and English were not advanced, but in Greek and Latin they would compare not unfavorably with the requirements of the best American colleges of our day. They included five books of the "Anabasis," two of the "Iliad," nine books of the "Æneid," the "Bucolics" and two "Georgics," Cicero's orations and Sallust; also, Latin composition and the grammars of both languages.

When Reed entered Bowdoin the college contained one hundred and ninety-five students. It was the day of the small college and the number was not greatly exceeded in any of the colleges of that time with perhaps three exceptions. The optional system had not

come into vogue and with scarcely an exception all members of a class were required to pursue the same studies. The most stress was laid upon Latin and Greek, and the study of those languages was continued for three years. Mathematics was followed through calculus. The course had a theological bent. The Freshmen were required to study Paley's "Natural Theology" and the "Evidences" by the same author. These studies were followed by "Butler's Analogy." Hebrew was prescribed for the Seniors, or the Senior Sophisters as they were called in the catalogue. French and German were each taught for a year, and Spanish, apparently optional with the student, for a portion of a year. There was a fair amount of work in English, mental philosophy, and logic, and a very limited amount in science.

Very much of course depended upon the quality of the teaching, but if that were of a high character, the prescribed curriculum afforded the means of excellent discipline and of a liberal culture, and it laid the foundation for real scholarship and for the power to think seriously.

But the instruction appears to have been of a very high average quality. It is doubtful if in that respect it was quite equaled at that time by any other college in the country. The Faculty was composed of ten members. The President was Leonard Woods, one of the most learned men of his day and one who had enjoyed a range of experiences unusual in the president of a college. When but thirty-two years old and in the

year of Reed's birth, he became President of the College. He held the office for twenty-seven years. Early in his presidency he visited Europe and made the acquaintance of men like Stanley, Pusey, Newman, and Bunsen. He was received by Pope Gregory XVI, and in fixing upon the language to be used in the interview, Woods suggested French, German, and Latin, with a preference for the last, and the conversation proceeded for an hour in Latin. He was the guest of Louis Philippe, and was received in the apartments of the Queen, who showed him the embroidery made by her daughters; and he was permitted to assist in the work of holding a skein of worsted, while one of the princesses wound from it.

Very likely it was during this visit to Europe that he conceived the design of the ecclesiastical chapel at Bowdoin, which is still in use and which, although it has been many times exceeded in point of cost by the chapels of other colleges, has not been surpassed by any of them in appropriate beauty.

Woods had been educated at Dartmouth and Union, and it was probably from President Nott of the latter college that he acquired very liberal ideas in the management of students. Although he held the rigid orthodox views of that time in religion, he was very lenient in matters of discipline; two things that were not always found together. He trusted very much to the honor of the students. Professor Charles Carroll Everett expressed the opinion, in an address at Bowdoin in 1879, that "under President Woods Bowdoin

College offered means of education in some respects unequaled in the country." The President was much more to the students than a mere inspiration; he bore an important part in the work performed in the class-room.

Of the nine other instructors some were scarcely less distinguished than the President himself, and there is hardly one of them whose name is not held in respect to-day beyond the limits of the Bowdoin field. Professor Parker Cleaveland was perhaps the foremost American of his time in mineralogy, and was the author of the first textbook upon that subject in common use. The "Edinburgh Review" spoke of his work on geology and mineralogy as "the most useful work on mineralogy in our language."

Professor Thomas C. Upham was the author of many books, of which his "Mental Philosophy" was for a long time the standard textbook in American colleges. Provost Goodwin of the University of Pennsylvania said of him that he was "as versatile and many-sided as Ulysses, but to the right; good and steady at heart as the needle to the pole."

Professor Alpheus S. Packard was renowned as a teacher of the Classics and also as an author in his chosen field. The two Smyths were distinguished in their respective subjects, the one as a theological scholar and the other as the author of works on algebra and calculus, which were widely used in the other colleges. Professor Charles Carroll Everett, after notable service in the Bowdoin Faculty, became a professor at

Harvard. Joshua L. Chamberlain was then at the threshold of a varied and brilliant career. Although under thirty he had attained the rank of professor. He was destined to become a major-general, to command the Union army which received the surrender of Lee; and afterwards to become the President of Bowdoin and Governor of Maine. Warren Johnson became the first Superintendent of Schools of Maine and did much to perfect the system of state education. It was under such teachers that Reed had the good fortune to come when he entered Bowdoin.

The conditions surrounding the college were admirably adapted to secure to him the full benefit to be derived from such instructors. The number of students was small. All the members of a class pursued the same studies. It would sometimes have the same professor in courses running through two, or even three, years. The recitation, instead of the lecture, system prevailed in the class-room, with its more direct contact between the teacher and the scholar. Each student was likely to be called upon to recite each day, to be quizzed, and to receive the personal touch of the instructor. It was therefore inevitable that the teacher and the student who was not stupid should thoroughly measure each other, and that each should grasp the workings of the other's mind. Thus, with his four years at Bowdoin with such instruction, following nearly six years under Master Lyford, there were no American boys of his time whose opportunities for education Reed had reason to envy.

But it is important to consider the quality of the students, who have such an important educating influence upon each other. Turning from the instructors to the scholars, we find that the latter were almost wholly from New England, and the greater number of them from Maine. They were mainly of the same racial stock as Reed. Very few were from rich families, and many were wholly or partially dependent upon their own efforts for the means of maintaining themselves in the college. These requirements were by no means heavy, the total annual expense according to the Catalogue being $185. The common method of earning money was by teaching "winter school," and the college terms seem to have been adjusted so that such teaching might be followed with the least interruption to the college work. The summer vacation was only three weeks in length, instead of three months as is now the rule among colleges, and the long vacation period came in the winter. The average student did not enter the college because it was fashionable to do so or because he had been sent by his parents, but with the serious purpose of obtaining an education which he was willing to make sacrifices to secure. An atmosphere of study pervaded the place, and the competition in scholarship and in the debating contests was very keen.

The other marked qualities of the eternal schoolboy, however, were not wanting among the Bowdoin students. The spirit of work did not banish the spirit of play, and they were ready to perpetrate jokes of a

practical character upon each other and even upon members of the august Faculty. Athletic sports were not highly developed in the colleges of that day, but boating seems to have been well organized at Bowdoin. Reed was a member of the eight-oar crew of his class, and from a description of the boat which "The Bugle" has preserved for posterity, it appears that it was fifty feet long and painted straw color with blue stripes. He was also a member of a chess club, and one of the editors of the college paper just referred to — "The Bugle."

For lack of intensity in athletic rivalry, except during a brief portion of the year, the societies used to debate fiercely with each other. Reed was one of the foremost debaters in the college, and was sent forth by his society as one of its champions to vanquish its rivals. His speech in one of these debates made a deep impression, if one may judge from the current newspaper reports. The Peucinian, of which Reed was a member, had borne upon the rolls of its membership Nathan Lord, Henry W. Longfellow, Sergeant S. Prentiss, George Evans, William L. Putnam, and William P. Frye. The membership of the other society had been not less distinguished, containing as it did William Pitt Fessenden, Franklin Pierce, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and John A. Andrew. Each society thus had inspiring traditions, and the rivalry between them was very sharp.

Reed was also one of the leading spirits in the Bowdoin Debating Club, which was apparently made up of

members from both societies. He had a pronounced taste for discoursing upon moral themes. His memory was phenomenal and he showed clearly the ready wit for which he was afterwards distinguished in public life. In a short description of one of these debates which survives, there is evident the elaborate preparation that had been made by some of the speakers. One of Reed's adversaries was prepared to defend his position with a huge heap of books which he had brought in to support his arguments. When it came Reed's turn to speak, he arose slowly and with an appearance of indifference he proceeded to the argument which his opponent had thought it necessary to fortify with such a mass of authority. He hardly thought it necessary, he observed, "to bring in the whole college library," in order to maintain such a proposition.

The two societies were open ones, as distinguished from those which were secret and which had only a short time previously taken a firm hold at Bowdoin. To societies of the latter sort Reed at first was sternly opposed. There had been a strong sentiment developed against secret orders by the agitation against Masonry, which had attained the dignity of a national political issue. It is not unlikely that Reed had been affected by the arguments employed in that controversy. Although more than three fourths of all the students belonged to secret orders, Reed early in his course opposed them with some degree of bitterness. His classmate Allen, who became a member of the

class at the beginning of the Sophomore year, was about to join one of these orders when Reed strongly remonstrated with him and even made it something of a personal matter. Allen, however, persisted in his determination and became a member of the Psi Upsilon. Later Reed's antipathy to the secret societies seems to have vanished and he became a member of the Chi Psi.

During a part of his college course, Reed taught school. In the winter of his Senior year the school of which he was master was in Brunswick, about six miles distant from the village in which the college was situated, and he used to spend his holidays in the village with one of his college mates,[1] walking back and forth between the town and the school. "On one of these walks," Reed said afterwards, "I distinctly recollect there were huge drifts of snow from a recent storm. Jupiter was the planet nearest to the earth that night; and many a time I threw myself down on the snow to rest and gaze at that large ball of fire in the heavens."

Reed's means became completely exhausted during his Senior year and he was enabled to graduate with his class only by a timely loan of money made by William Pitt Fessenden. Fessenden's son Samuel and Reed were close friends, and although of different classes roomed together during Reed's Senior year. Young Fessenden learned that Reed's funds were exhausted and that he had decided to quit college, although within three months of graduation. He

[1] F. L. Dingley.

brought the matter to the attention of his father, with the result that a loan of two hundred dollars was made. Reed never forgot this kindness. When Senator Fessenden voted against the impeachment of Andrew Johnson in 1868, and alienated many members of his party by that courageous but unpopular act, Reed bravely defended him, although with some risk to himself, as he was at that time just entering upon his own political career. The loan had long before been repaid with interest. Reed paid the greater part of it the year after graduation and the final payment was inclosed in a letter written when he was an assistant paymaster in the Navy on the U.S. Steamer Sybil at Memphis, October 18, 1864. The letter concluded as follows: —

> I know you will not believe me any less thankful if I express my thanks in few words. Since you loaned me the money I have seen enough of the world to know that I might live as long again without finding a man who would do such an act of kindness in so kind a manner.

Reed's room-mate, Samuel Fessenden, was a young man of brilliant promise. He became a lieutenant of artillery in the Union army, was mortally wounded in battle, and died in Centreville, Virginia, September 1, 1862. In his speech at the Portland Centennial in 1886 Reed spoke thus tenderly of both father and son: —

> The most impressive scene I ever witnessed took place in this very hall. Here, almost on the very spot where I now stand, William Pitt Fessenden stood, before the constituency which had loved and honored him for so many years. The hall was black with the thronging multitude. It was at the

beginning of a great presidential campaign, the last he was ever to witness. The great problem of reconstruction was to be reviewed. Mr. Fessenden had been the master-spirit in its solution. The war-debt was to be assailed. Mr. Fessenden had been chairman of the Committee on Finance and Secretary of the Treasury. To all this was added the intense personal interest of his recent defeat of the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. With full knowledge of the storm about him, but with the courage of a perfect conviction, he faced the responsibility. The occasion was a great one, but the man was greater than the occasion. Calmly ignoring, except in one sharp, incisive sentence, all that was personal, with his old vigor, terseness and simplicity he explained to his townsmen the momentous issues of the campaign. From the moment he began, the party rage commenced to cease and the old pride in his greatness and honesty began to take its place. How strong he looked that night! Although all the world might falter, you knew that calm face would be steadfast. To him had happened the rare good fortune of having courage and character which matched a great opportunity. Few men would have been so brave, and fewer still, successful.

I have not spoken of the conduct of our city in either of the wars waged beyond its limits. That subject also would be too vast for an occasion like this. Nor do I like to speak at all of the one within the memory of us all. For us it has as much of sorrow as of glory. It brings up to me the vision of a fair young face, the quiet associate of the studious hours, the bright companion of the days of pleasure. Can it be that I shall never look into those cheerful eyes again? Can it be that neither the quaint jest of the happier hours, nor the solemn confidences of the heart just opening to a full sense of the high duties of life, will ever again fall upon the ear of friendship or of love? It can be no otherwise. He can only live in my memory, but he lives there, sublimated in the crucible of death, from all imperfections, clothed upon with all his virtues and radiant with all the possibilities of a generous youth. Other companions have failed in their careers, but not he. All the world has grown old, but he is forever young. And yet the dead, however sweetly embalmed, are

but the dead. One touch of the vanished hand were worth all our dreams. All our memories, however tender, are consolation only because there can be no other, for the lost strength and vigor of the living, the stilled pulsations of a heart no longer beating to thoughts of earth. What safe my heart holds, holds many a heart in this great audience. The generations to come will celebrate the glory. This generation knows the cost.

Reed was not a hard student during the first three years of his college course, although even during those years he maintained a place among the leaders of his class. He distinguished himself in the languages, but on account of the excellent training he had received in the High School, he was able to attain a good rank without hard study. He aroused himself during his Senior year, with the result that his rank was not only the highest in the class in that year, but fell short of being perfect only by a very small fraction. Symonds was not far behind him, and they were in a class by themselves, far in advance of the one who was third. The rank for the Freshman year does not appear to be obtainable, but on the average for the last three years Boyd, who afterwards became a professor in the college, was the leader of the class, which graduated fifty-five members. Symonds, destined to become a member of the Supreme Court of Maine, and the youngest man who ever attained a place upon it, was second, and Reed was the fifth and easily one of those elected to the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Reed had distinguished himself in language, in philosophy, moral and intellectual, and by taking the first prize in English com-

position in the Senior year. At graduation, August 1, 1860, he delivered an oration upon "The Fear of Death." The newspaper reports of that time commended his part as "excellently written," and delivered with energy. The Brunswick "Telegraph" is authority for the statement that he "treated his subject in a peculiar vein but in good taste, and his language in many passages was singularly beautiful and appropriate."

Many exercises evidently written by Reed while in college are still in existence, and when his experience and age are considered it must be conceded that they are well written. In an essay on Penn he said: "Great minds are perhaps only little minds magnified. If their virtues are enlarged, their imperfections are increased. Take a man in a crowd and you will notice neither the one nor the other; but elevate him, let all the world gaze at him, and his vices will be as prominent as his virtues." Writing of the "Disquietudes of Fame," he argued that ambition was advantageous to the world at large but brought to the individual more sorrow than pleasure. "A life of ambition," he said, "must always be a life of toil and tension. And what is the reward? A place in history. Can this benefit the dead?" Among the subjects upon which he wrote were "Is man Responsible for his Belief?" and "Does Education have a Tendency to Detract from True Originality?" He had a fondness for the discussion of theological questions. Prior to entering college he had joined the State Street Congregational Church in Portland, but while in college he discussed religious

questions freely and came to question some of the doctrines of the church. A letter written February 7, 1863, to Reverend Hugh Carpenter, the pastor of his church, will show something of the condition of Reed's religious belief two years and a half after he had graduated from college, and of the way in which his change of belief was brought about. The letter is a long one but the following extracts will serve to indicate its character:

During the time I was in College I had the habit of discussing theological questions at every opportunity with anybody and everybody. I always took the opposite side, with rigid and pleasing impartiality. If my opponent was an Unbeliever I tried to convince him of the truth of Christianity; if a Christian, I asked him to answer the objections which seemed to me worthy of consideration. Of course I could not go on in this manner without giving a careful investigation to the whole subject when alone by myself. The conclusion of the whole matter, the various phases of which you can easily imagine, was this, that the creed of the Church was untenable. . . . I do not believe in an Atonement, because I cannot see its necessity. The whole idea strikes me as artificial. If all our sins and their effects are to be washed away by vicarious suffering and we are to find ourselves pure and perfect when we touch the other shore, the problem of "Recognition in Heaven" is going to be terribly complicated. It is needless perhaps to say that I am not persuaded of the "fall of man"; and as for that apotheosis of lounging, the life in the Garden of Eden, I believe in it as little as I do in the Saturnia Regna. If that Paradise had ever existed and man had grown up in it, it would have been merely a Paradise of fools. It is only by fighting the devil, that we ever get to be anything. God's law, "In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread," is not a sentence of banishment and disgrace, but a promise of strength, progress and power. The doctrine of Eternal Punishment is equally repugnant. The main object of punishment in this world is not to inflict pain, but

by means of pain to deter the criminal and other members of society from committing crimes. To punish a man when he can no longer commit crime and after the possibility of serving as an example has ceased, would, on this earth, be inexcusable and wanton malignity and I cannot think that the conditions of things will be so radically changed as to make it wisdom, justice, and mercy in the future world. . . .

My positive beliefs can be put into a much smaller space. I believe in God as the maker and controller of the world. I have no doubt that he has predestined everything from the beginning; that we are mere machines in his hand to do his will, that he rules us by supplying motives, so that all our little designs are in perfect harmony with his great design. As for the future life, I suppose we shall commence our existence where we left off here. The more I have disciplined myself here, the better position I shall have hereafter. If I can make myself like the good and great of past ages, when I reach heaven I shall sit down with St. Paul and Abraham and Isaac and all those whose applause I have worthily sought during my life. If I become an unscrupulous villain, I shall probably have to sit down with that rascally Jacob, who took advantage of his brother's hunger to cheat him out of his birthright and then filched from him his father's blessing and afterwards became one of the Fathers of the Faithful. . . .

Reed could not be called a college chauvinist, but he retained a deep regard for Bowdoin. Nearly thirty years after his graduation he said in an address at Brunswick: "Bowdoin has many superiors in wealth and size, but for the production of men of good sense, culture, intellectual grasp and capacity for affairs, it has few rivals and no superior."

It was not at all inconsistent with this estimate that he put upon the college that he made a very sensible criticism of the college education of that time. This

criticism appeared in a paper he read at a club in Portland in the earlier part of his public career, and was afterwards repeated at Bowdoin in a modified form. With some light and witty observations about the Faculty he mingled some serious views upon education. This paper is labeled in the handwriting of Reed, "Professors much disgusted." But the disgust was apparently due to their own lack of humor. He was clearly expressing his own sense of the contrast between the college standard and that to which the college graduate was compelled to adapt himself when he went into active life. He said: —

"Perhaps the most useless piece of furniture on the footstool for the first two or three years is the college graduate, whose scholarship was a comfort to the professors and an annoyance to his competitors. These years are a worry to the scholar himself. He has to take all that time to get right with the new world, to find the other standards by which he must measure his efforts, and to realize the nothingness of the honors he has won."

He detected the lack of the practical element in the college course, and what he said would have applied not merely to Bowdoin, but probably to all the other colleges of that day.

If it were true [*he said*] that what we popularly call Education, that is, Book Learning, made the whole man, if mathematics, classics and sciences were all the cargo he was to take abroad, we might easily make up a select assortment such as no gentleman's mind should be without and send our young graduate to sea with reasonable hope that he would arrive safe and sound and sell all his wares in celestial and everlasting markets.

CHAPTER III

THE NAVY—EARLY POLITICAL CAREER

After graduating Reed at once set to work, in order to earn money with which to pay his college debts. He taught school for a year in the Boys' High School of Portland, where he had fitted for college, and also for a few months in Stockton, California. He began the study of law in 1861, probably in San José, California, and continued its study in Portland until 1864, in which year, on the 19th of April, he enlisted in the Navy. He was appointed an acting assistant paymaster, was assigned to the Mississippi squadron commanded by Admiral Porter, and ordered in June, 1864, to the steamer Sybil. He remained on this ship for more than a year, and indeed until his active service in the Navy ended. He was honorably discharged November 4, 1865, after a service of nearly nineteen months. The position of paymaster in the Navy is not ordinarily a fighting place; the title of the office surely has a pacific sound; but that officer must take his chances with his ship and is exposed to most of the dangers of battle. If the ship is sunk he is as likely to find his way to the bottom as is any of the crew. When therefore Reed enlisted and took his place in a squadron which had rendered historic service on the Mississippi, at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Pittsburg Land-

ing, and Vicksburg, and was likely to be called upon again for hazardous service, he was to be credited with the same courage as would have been implied by enlistment as a fighting officer or sailor. But he was disposed to make very light of his service in the Navy, as will appear from a speech he made before the Loyal Legion in 1884, in Washington: —

The Navy means to me far different things than to many here before me. To the distinguished admiral [Steedman] who sits beside me, and to the distinguished admiral [Jenkins] who sits opposite, it means the shriek of shot and shell, the horrors of the blockade. To me it meant no roaring wind, no shriek of shot and shell, but level water and the most delightful time of my life. For I was on a gunboat on the Mississippi River after the valor and courage of you gentlemen had driven the enemy off. . . . You see, I kept a grocery store for the government, and well remember how I was tumbled aboard ship the first day, with the provisions and small stores and a set of books, and the boat steamed up the magnificent defiles of the Tennessee. . . . But I also suffered for my country. How well I remember the fatal day when I drew five thousand dollars from the bank. The first time I counted the bills there was only forty-eight hundred dollars. The next time it came out fifty-two hundred dollars. I sweltered over it in the bank that hot August day, but it never would come out two times alike. Then in utter despair I bundled it up, took it aboard, locked myself in my office, and there in grim despair wrestled with it alone. And lo and behold! there was just five thousand dollars, — just what the bank clerk told me there was.

It was a delightful life. Thirteen hundred dollars a year and one ration, and nothing to do. My sad heart hath often panted for it since. However, I learned that my country could support me, and I am bound to say it has faithfully done so almost ever since. What a charming life that was, that dear old life in the Navy! I knew all the regulations

and the rest of them did n't. I had all my rights and most of theirs. . . .

Do you wonder that I stand up for the Navy? I want it increased and I have solid reasons for it. It means something to me.

Mr. Commander and companions, I have made this speech to you in the lightest vein because I have no right to use any other. The brave faces that I see before me have been bared to the shock of battle and of storm. You have seen on a hundred battle-fields the living and the dead. It would be a shame for me to talk seriously of service to men like you. This button — insignia of the order — *you* wear because you honor it. *I* wear it because *it* honors *me*.

His service on the Sybil, patrolling the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi rivers, was an excellent supplement to his training in college and as a teacher. One has no difficulty in picturing him as the life of the company of officers aboard the ship, making the happenings of the day the subject of his droll and philosophic talk.

His sojourn of nearly a year in California also helped broaden his outlook, but he was very far from getting out of it the enjoyment that he had derived from his service in the Navy. An article written while he was in that state reads very much like the composition of a homesick man. The inhabitants of California, he wrote, were from all quarters of the globe — "from New England, Pike County, Missouri, and distant lands." He divided California into two parts, "San Francisco and the rest of California." Of the latter part, he said that it

is populated exclusively from Pike County, Missouri. Within the limits of that fatal region a white man is seldom seen. When one white man meets another there is no

pleasant spectacle, for they meet but to mingle the tears of exile in a foreign land, to talk over happiness departed and to dream of home and Christian civilization.

When a man lands in California the citizens crowd around him to explain what a fortunate being he is and to demand of him immediate, instant recognition of the greatness of the country. . . .

Everyone praises the climate. Now I am forced, though reluctantly, to admit that the climate is not so bad. To smoke the pipe of peace in the midst of January weather is certainly comforting. But I have noticed that while all Californians are gratifyingly unanimous in chanting the glories of the climate of the Pacific slope in general, each one refreshes himself by cursing in particular the spot which the wrath of God has condemned him to help populate. The programme of the weather in San Francisco during the summer months is as regular as the rascality of the stockbrokers. In the morning about ten o'clock the heat is tempered by a wind which sets in from the ocean. Alone, by itself, this would be grateful. But it is fated that all pleasant things should have their compensations. And, as it is, this refreshing breeze serves to fill the air with clouds of blinding dust. . . . In the interior the mornings are pleasant but the afternoons most intolerably hot, giving one a lifelike idea of the feelings of a wet rag. The dust lies foot-deep all summer long. What clothes you wear is a matter of sublime indifference; for a half-mile walk makes black and white all one color. . . . In the winter the rain falls in torrents till the whole state is one vast sea of mud.

Warm weather all the year round would be a comfort, indeed, if one could sometimes sprawl on the green grass and enjoy the pleasant breeze. But green grass we sometimes see in dreams in California, but never on the ground. In a few front yards in San Francisco, grass struggles for existence, but it looks like the recollection of green grass, not green grass itself. Even the trees are so enveloped in dust that a man forgets the color of leaves. The whole aspect of nature is unutterably barren. The mountains are bare of trees. . . . One longs to see on the hills the forests of pine which beautify

our New England hills. . . . Nature never intended any man to live here, only to dig gold and get himself out of it; and shudder in dreams ever afterwards.

After five years spent in teaching, in the naval service, and in California, Reed found himself, in the latter part of 1865, in his native city of Portland. He had been admitted to the bar at San José, California, September 8, 1863, where he was examined by William P. Wallace, one of the most distinguished lawyers in that state. Reed was asked if he thought the Legal Tender Act, then recently passed, was constitutional, and he answered that he thought it was. Wallace thereupon said that another young man that morning had answered the same question the other way. "We will recommend you both favorably, as we think that all young men who can answer great constitutional questions off-hand, ought to be admitted to the bar." He was also admitted to the bar of Cumberland County, Maine, in October, 1865, on the recommendation of the examining committee, of which Nathan Webb and S. C. Strout were members. He took an office in Portland and began to contend for a living at a bar which was not merely the strongest in Maine but, in average quality, one of the strongest in the country. Among its members were his own college friends Putnam and Symonds, who were destined to achieve distinction.

The first of his cases to reach the Supreme Court of his state was decided in 1868. The amount involved was $48. Reed, who was for the plaintiff, had won a

verdict in the lower court, but the case was taken up on the important question of law whether driving with a young lady Sunday evening was a work of necessity or charity, if the young lady had earlier in the day walked several miles to church. The court above reversed the verdict and Reed lost his momentous contention.

He was not long in establishing himself, and his rise was rapid. After less than three years of practice he was nominated by the Republicans of Portland as their candidate for the Legislature, and his nomination was followed by an election. His reputation as a lawyer preceded him to the State Capitol and he was given a place on the Judiciary Committee, which was the leading committee in the Legislature. The most important legislation of which he had charge was a bill establishing a Superior Court for his county, the enactment of which he was able to secure. The passage of this law reduced the time of bringing contested suits to jury trial from three years to three months. He was again elected to the House of Representatives in 1869, and in the following year was chosen to the State Senate.

While a member of the House, Reed delivered a short memorial address upon William Pitt Fessenden. He began by saying: "The regard and affection which I had for Mr. Fessenden while he lived render it necessary that I should say a few words to-day. My only fear is that I may be doing less justice to the dead than if I remain silent. . . . He occupied many high posi-

tions and he occupied none which he did not fill." He eulogized Fessenden as a public speaker, and praised the "wit and wisdom of his talk and the brilliance of his thought and action."

One of his longest speeches made in either house was against capital punishment, and his speech is well worth reading to-day. After presenting in a striking fashion most of the old arguments and some new ones in favor of his contention, he referred to his colleague who had "brought before the House the opinions of the assembled divines of Cumberland County." He did not hesitate to express himself pretty strongly about the action of this powerful body of men, even though they came from his own county.

> They declare that capital punishment alone is "consonant with the revealed will of God." I do not purpose to answer them or the many texts of Scripture which have been quoted. There are times when men wrest Scripture to their own destruction. Past history ought to make men careful how they lightly thrust their own crude notions upon the God of Mercy and Love, who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Ever since Christ died, men have stood up and fought God with texts of his own Scripture. What hoary wrong, doomed by the wrath of God, has there ever been, that has not been propped up during its last years by texts of Scripture! You all remember how Paul and Onesimus bore the burden of slavery, and Paul and Timothy were made the advocates of intemperance; and I challenge any man to produce an instance of any reform that has not been met by this misinterpretation, misconstruction, and desecration of God's Word. God's law as given to Moses, was given to conform to the situation of the people at that time. Picking up sticks on the Sabbath was a capital offense under the Mosaic law. They required peculiar laws for they were

surrounded by peculiar circumstances. If my colleague insists on the death penalty for murder as a divine institution, why not for the thirty and more other crimes, to which death was meted out by them of olden time?

In the Senate he opposed a bill which had already passed the House, authorizing the city of Portland to loan its credit to a railroad. He was sharply called to account for his opposition, and in defense he declared his unqualified hostility to every bill, from whatever quarter it might come, proposing municipal aid to railroads. After he retired from the Legislature, he adhered to the same position, and in 1871 he appeared before a committee of the Portland city council to oppose granting aid to another railroad. In the course of his remarks he sarcastically drew the conclusion that "figures done up in the form of estimates sometimes lie."

The sessions of the Maine Legislature were brief in those times, and his service did not materially interfere with his law practice. His legislative service and the prominence he had attained in his profession gave him a reputation throughout the state, and while still a senator he was selected in 1870 by the Republican party as its candidate for Attorney-General of the state, and was elected by the Legislature. He had as rival candidates for the nomination two lawyers of high standing, one of whom, General Plaisted, was afterwards Governor of Maine. At the time Reed was elected Attorney-General he was only thirty years old, the youngest age at which the office has ever been

held in Maine. His three years of service in the office greatly enriched his professional experience and established him in the front rank of the Maine bar. There was the usual work incident to the position of chief law-officer of the state. Among the more notable suits in which the young Attorney-General participated were a sensational murder trial, in which he secured a conviction, and a recovery of money due the state through a defalcation. The latter case affords an excellent illustration of the public-mindedness and independence which always characterized Reed. The State Treasurer had defaulted for a large amount of money more than ten years previously. His bondsmen, by the exercise of powerful political influence, had avoided prosecution for this long period. Similar influence was brought to bear upon Reed, but he insisted on bringing the delayed cases forward for trial, with the result that some of the bondsmen consented to settlements favorable to the state and judgments were secured against the others.

On February 5, 1870, Reed married Susan, the oldest daughter of Reverend S. H. Merrill of Portland. This union was destined to be a very happy one. He took his wife fully into his confidence in his public work, and she became his best critic, whose judgment he sought and followed. It was his habit to rehearse to her whatever he wrote or proposed to speak upon important occasions. Among his unpublished manuscripts is one, brilliant but rather denunciatory in tone, which bears upon it the note in his handwriting, "Not published,

by order of madam." The great intelligence and good sense of Mrs. Reed proved of the highest value to him in his work.

On June 18, 1874, he made a speech before the Republican State Convention of Maine. He defended President Grant's vetoes of the inflation measures and declared strongly for sound money. He advocated the payment of the greenbacks according to the promise of the government which they bore. This payment was to be in gold and silver. "The universal consent of the world has fixed upon gold and silver as containing that permanent element which makes it [them] the fit circulating medium of the world, and all mankind are pretty sure to be wiser than any one man or any one nation."

After his service as Attorney-General, Reed devoted himself entirely to his law practice in Portland, which became extensive. He had established himself as one of the most brilliant lawyers in Maine. His own city was at the time involved in important litigation and he was selected by the mayor as its counsel, and until he went to Washington he held the office of city solicitor. During the next few years he led the life of a busy lawyer, and during all that time he numbered Portland among his clients.

But his professional career, which he had so successfully entered upon, was destined to a long interruption. In 1876 he became a candidate for the Republican nomination for Representative in Congress, and a spirited campaign was made throughout the district.

The district was composed of the counties of York and Cumberland. The "locality" argument was against him, and it has been a powerful argument in our politics. As he wrote at another time: "In politics, if you want to defeat a man because he is a bad lot, a thief, or a knave, don't say that; explain how he comes from the wrong town."[1] The sitting member was from York, and it was claimed by his friends that he was entitled to another nomination because the representative had been chosen from Cumberland County, where Reed lived, much more than its proportionate share of time. An appeal was taken to the lofty spirit of county chauvinism. The candidacy of Reed was pressed on the single ground of his high fitness for the office, and compared with that the county argument was a very trivial one. The counties could have no real antagonistic interests in Washington, but it would be for the advantage of both of them, and also of the country, to be represented by their strongest man. Mr. Burleigh, the sitting member, had weakened himself politically by a proceeding which was entirely to his honor. The Kittery Navy Yard was situated in the county in which he lived, and he had caused an investigation of alleged corruption in connection with it. By this action he had incurred the hostility of the most powerful politicians of his party in Maine.

Reed's standing with his neighbors was shown by the result in Portland. That city decided for him at the caucuses by 1047 votes to 393, and elected a dele-

[1] *Saturday Evening Post.*

gation unanimously favorable to his nomination. The Congressional Convention was held on June 29, 1876. The York delegates attempted to have the Convention pass a resolution that York was entitled to the nomination. This was antagonized by a resolution offered by one of Reed's friends to the effect that each congressional district was a unit, that any attempt to limit the choice to any particular section of the district would tend to create sectional discord and strife, and would degrade the office by making the incumbent the representative of local and private interests instead of the whole constituency, and that the interests of the district, the state, and the nation only should be considered. There was a warm debate over this resolution. A York County delegate, who was described by Reed's chief newspaper supporter as a "peppery little man," declared that the delegation from Portland was "elected by and represented a rabble." This declaration was received by cheers from the one party and hisses from the other. After more of the same sort the orator concluded with the statement that the business men of the county, the young men, and the farmers "would vote the Democratic ticket before they would vote for Mr. Reed"; and then amid hisses he took his seat.

This stormy speech was a not very gracious recognition of the fact that Reed's friends were in a majority. And so it turned out, for Reed received 134 votes, to 121 for all other candidates. Upon being informed of his nomination he appeared before the Convention and made a conciliatory speech.

But it was necessary for him to undertake a thorough canvass of the district, which was not very strongly Republican even when the party was united. The friends of the defeated candidate did not submit gracefully and some of them organized a bolt in his favor. They issued a proclamation, the strong point of which was his record in regard to the Navy Yard investigation. There was, however, so much unfairness in the document, especially in its attempted depreciation of Reed, that it is doubtful whether it did not help the latter more than it harmed him. It charged him with being a "comparatively young man, with but limited experience. He is not directly connected with either of the great business interests of the district. In his own profession he does not stand preëminent. He is not the man Cumberland County would have brought forward if she had been called on to name her choice." The Portland "Advertiser," which was the leading newspaper supporter of Mr. Burleigh in the canvass for the nomination, but which supported Reed after the convention had been held, in discussing the manifesto pointed out that Portland had given Reed 1096 votes as against only 393 for Mr. Burleigh, and admitted that "Mr. Reed is a young man, but not too young to have distinguished himself in an arduous and crowded profession. If not preëminent, he is at least eminent at the bar."

But the burning county issue raged throughout the campaign and a good deal of bitterness was shown. There were some antagonisms also, which a man of

Reed's powerful personality would be likely to arouse. And in addition to all the other difficulties the Republicans of Maine were keenly disappointed over the failure of their fellow-citizen, James G. Blaine, after a memorable contest, to secure the presidential nomination in the Convention which had just been held at Cincinnati. Although Blaine had received the votes of a majority of the members of the Convention upon different ballots, his full strength was not marshaled upon any single ballot, and he failed of the nomination by an extremely narrow margin. Nowhere did he have friends more devoted to him than in his own state, and there was danger that resentment at his defeat might cause the loss to his party of a considerable number of votes. But the course which Blaine pursued quickly dispelled this danger. He loyally supported the candidates of his party.

The election of state officers and members of Congress was held in Maine in early September, in advance of the elections in nearly all the states. The strategic importance of the result, which the winning party might make much of throughout the country, increased the interest in the contest and augmented the efforts of both parties to secure the victory. Maine became a great battlefield, and leading party orators were summoned from other states to take part in the struggle. Reed canvassed his district very thoroughly, going from town to town, speaking at meetings both large and small, and very much extending his personal acquaintance with his future constituents. The prime

factor in making his campaign successful was his ability in political discussion. In that field in his state he easily shone without a rival, and it would have been difficult to find his equal in the country anywhere.

His speeches in the campaign did not at all lack in partisanship. Those were the times of high partisan feeling and Reed did not disappoint his audiences; but apparently he had little to say about the war issues and discussed the questions that were particularly before the country. He ridiculed the claim of the Democratic party that it was in favor of civil service reform. He denounced its attitude on the question of the currency, declaring that it had shown itself the friend of repudiation. It took Tilden, he declared, forty-two days and forty-two nights to write his letter of acceptance, — "just two days and two nights longer than the Deluge," — and they might consider themselves fortunate that he did not write more.

The result of it all was that the proportions of the "bolt" steadily dwindled, and although some members of his party were misled into giving a vote which they lived to regret, Reed was elected by about 1000 plurality in a total vote reaching 31,000. Thus the small margin by which he had been nominated was repeated at the election, and he started upon his career as a national statesman.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST SERVICE IN CONGRESS

The election of 1876 resulted in the choice of Mr. Hayes as President, after a contest which was continued after the election and was not decided until the very eve of the inauguration. The election resulted also in a House of Representatives which was Democratic by a small majority and it was this House of which Reed was first chosen a member.

A new set of questions came to the front with the inauguration of Hayes, and those important issues which were old took on a much modified form. The enormous expenditures of the War, with the inflation of the currency and the application of taxation in nearly every conceivable form, had resulted in governmental extravagance, in speculation, and unfortunately also in a good deal of corruption. The high purposes, first of nationality and then of freedom, which had marked the prosecution of the War, and the readjustments which followed it, had engaged the public mind upon a level far above the questions relating to finance and to the ordinary details of correct government; and while it was engaged in its lofty contemplations there was an ideal opportunity for pushing questionable schemes, for graft, and for gross and petty thievery. The glory of the flag had become

so exalted that it would cover the passage of any appropriation, however extravagant, which the most indifferent rhetoric could entangle in its folds.

Times of public exaltation are in danger of being also times of corruption. The thrifty patriot keeps his eye upon the main chance, and he successfully prosecutes his operations upon the earth while the heads of those about him are among the clouds. Abstract theory and a species of idealism with little qualification had been dominating the government. The doctrine of the equality of all men was rigorously put in practical force so far as the law could do it, and the ballot was suddenly conferred upon millions of untrained men, who became themselves the innocent victims of a system which gave them no preliminary training in the duties of citizenship, and who were put to a test which no other race under similar conditions could have endured. While the inhabitants of the North were rejoicing in the literal application of the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and were in their own minds reveling in a golden age of democracy, industrious politicians were using the votes of hundreds of thousands of men in the South, only recently in slavery and wholly without experience in politics, for the support of a régime of plunder to which history furnishes no parallel. This system of robbery had been checked before the inauguration of Mr. Hayes, but much remained to be done to put an end to it.

The national currency was not upon a sound basis,

and inflation measures had been brought forward having for their object the payment of the national debt in greenbacks and the issuing of more paper money. The argument that the greenback was good enough for the soldier who risked his life, and should be good enough for the bondholder who risked only his money, was taking in its popular appeal. But Grant was the last man to cultivate popularity at the expense of the public credit, or indeed at the sacrifice of any sound principle of government, and against inflation he had steadily interposed his veto. The currency had not reached the gold basis from which it had departed at the beginning of the war. Indeed the national greenback from the day of its issue had never been at par with gold. The resumption of gold payments had been decreed to take effect at the beginning of the year 1879, but the large majority of both houses of Congress, and doubtless also of the people, at the moment was opposed to carrying the law into effect, and strong efforts were destined to be made for its repeal.

This question of the monetary standard continued, in various forms, to be an engrossing one during Reed's entire career in Washington. In addition to the issues relating to the suffrage in the South, the civil rights of the freedmen, and the standard of value of money, other practical issues were coming forward. The destruction of the spoils system and the establishment of necessary reforms in the civil service were among them. These questions and others of almost equal

difficulty and importance were pressing upon an administration which, unlike any of its predecessors, had come into office with a clouded title. To this cloud upon the title the President soon imparted an appearance of solidity by recognizing Democratic state governments in South Carolina and Louisiana as a result of the same elections in which Republican electors had been chosen and to which he himself owed his power. The Republican critics of the President pointed out that the Republican governments in those states had been elected by the same votes as had been the electors supporting the President himself. If the title of the former was bad it was urged that that of the latter was bad also.

But the President did not assume to pass upon the title of the state officers. He determined that the time had come to put a stop to the steady use of Federal bayonets in order to sustain the reconstructed governments, and that the states themselves should decide between claimants to state office. He proceeded upon the theory that it would be better that a mistake should be made by state tribunals in determining what state officers had been chosen, than that an extraordinary Federal power should be constantly invoked and the army permanently employed to bolster up the claims of one of two rival state legislatures. He determined to require that a state government, even if legal in form, should show its ability to stand alone.

The President summoned the new Congress to meet in special session on October 15, 1877. This was made

necessary because of the failure of the preceding Congress to pass the annual appropriation bill for the support of the army. This refusal to pass a regular supply bill for one of the great departments of the government served to emphasize the political passion of the time and the issue upon which there was perhaps the most acute division. The size and expense of the army had little or nothing to do with the refusal, for it was small and the appropriations asked for were not extravagant. The real ground of opposition on the part of the Democratic House in the preceding Congress was that the army had been employed to maintain Republican state governments in the South. However, it was necessary that there should be an army, and accordingly the President called Congress together.

At the assembling of this Congress, Reed first took the oath of office as a Representative. He found himself in a distinguished company of men. Among his colleagues from his own state were William P. Frye and Eugene Hale, then near the beginning of careers of public service destined to be of great length and highly honorable to themselves and the country. Among the other members were S. S. Cox, Clarkson N. Potter, and Frank Hiscock of New York; Samuel J. Randall, W. D. Kelley, and W. S. Stenger of Pennsylvania; J. Randolph Tucker of Virginia; Alexander H. Stephens and James H. Blount of Georgia; H. D. Money and Charles E. Hooker of Mississippi; J. Warren Keifer, Charles Foster, Thomas Ewing, William McKinley, and James A. Garfield of Ohio; J. Proctor

Knott, John G. Carlisle, and J. C. S. Blackburn of Kentucky; Carter H. Harrison, H. C. Burchard, William M. Springer and Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois; Richard P. Bland of Missouri; Omar D. Conger of Michigan; John H. Reagan, D. B. Culberson, and R. Q. Mills of Texas; W. W. Crapo, B. F. Butler, W. A. Field, N. P. Banks, George B. Loring, and George D. Robinson of Massachusetts. It may well be doubted whether any House since the foundation of the government contained a more imposing array of talent, more men who were destined to win high distinction or who had already achieved it, or more men with names as splendid in our parliamentary history.

The Democrats nominated Mr. Randall for Speaker, and the Republicans Mr. Garfield. The former was chosen by a vote of 149 to 132.

Reed began his career in the House with a good deal of modesty. In accordance with the rules the Speaker appointed the committees. Those to which Reed was assigned were not of the first rank. He was given a place on the Committee on Territories, and to that was soon added a place on a committee of still less importance. He was very constant in his attendance, and it was rare that he did not respond upon the roll-call except upon occasions when the votes of Republicans were withheld for purposes of filibustering. At first he took little part in debate, evidently not unmindful of the fate of the new member who at once attempts to assume leadership, and is too ready in the expression of his views. He took no public part in the

work of the special session except to vote. His first speech was a very brief one and was made at the regular session in December in explanation of a small local bill of which he apparently had charge.

On the 18th of January, 1878, his state presented to the government a statue of William King, and it was given a place in the rather miscellaneous assortment of works of art in Statuary Hall. This occasion was marked by speeches in both the Senate and the House. In the course of the exercises in the Senate, Mr. Blaine reflected upon the attitude of Massachusetts in the War of 1812, and became involved in a controversy with the Senators from Massachusetts. The proceedings in the House were more uneventful, and Reed contributed a very sober speech, excellent in form, treating of the unsubstantial character of fame, after the style of some of his college performances.

> We all know too sadly well [*he said*] that oblivion begins to devour the mightiest when dead, and has in all ages been so greedy as to overtake some men yet living. Human fame, even of those who are at pains to preserve their memories, is as evanescent as the cloud of a summer sky. . . . Hence it is that the State of Maine, when called upon to place in the National Hall of Statuary the figure of the son she most willingly remembers, has passed by men of his time certainly more famous but not greater, and chosen William King. It seems also highly fitting, both as a memorial and as an example, that in that Hall which has so often echoed to the voices of many men whose fame seemed to fill the country but who are now forgotten, because their aims were selfish and their purposes petty, should stand the statue of William King, placed there, not because the land is resonant with his name, but because he did his state enduring service.

A few days afterward he took part in debate upon a bill relating to navigation, and he proposed an amendment which was adopted. After the amendment had been carried, the Speaker suggested that the same result could be obtained by striking out a section of the bill, and Reed dryly replied to the suggestion, amid laughter by the House, "Inasmuch as my amendment has been carried, if it pleases the Chair, I do not like to disturb it." He voted against the so-called Bland-Allison bill, which appeared first as a bill for the free coinage of silver, and had had added to it an amendment which changed it into a silver-purchase bill. When the measure was vetoed by the President, Reed voted to sustain the veto, although the House voted against the President by nearly three to one.

His speech in favor of an amendment increasing the salaries of our ministers to Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, although very brief, was more interesting than any speech he had yet made in the House. He said in the course of it: —

> We have been so niggardly in this respect altogether that none but rich men can afford to accept these positions. For my part, I shall be sorry when this Government reaches such a condition that its most important and dignified offices can be filled only by wealthy men. I believe that persons whom we invite to do service for us in foreign countries should be paid such salaries as will enable them, out of the emoluments of their offices, to sustain themselves in a manner satisfactory to us.

On April 12, 1878, a bill was considered in the House to reimburse William and Mary College for the

burning of its principal college building by some drunken stragglers after a battle in the Civil War. The measure aroused a great deal of interest on account of the fame of the College. The names of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, and Winfield Scott had been borne upon its roll of students. Sir Christopher Wren had been its architect. Mr. George B. Loring of Massachusetts made an eloquent speech in favor of the appropriation. Reed made his first real speech in the House in reply to Loring. He opposed the bill on the ground that it would be a precedent for a long list of Southern war-claims. In the course of this speech, he said: —

> It seemed to me strange when Washington and Jefferson and Sir Christopher Wren were brought in to decide the question whether we should pay sixty-five thousand dollars for a burned building; but when it came to the introduction of Milton, and for aught I know, of Luther and Locke, I confess I was astounded. [*Applause and laughter.*] We heard of Sir Harry Vane and Cromwell. — "Why," said Cromwell, "the Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane"; — and I say, upon a question of this kind, the Lord deliver the Congress of the United States from Sir Harry Vane and Cromwell too.
>
> I desire this American Congress to consider this question in the light of reason not in the light of rhetoric. — "Oh," they say, "this is not to establish a precedent; there can be nothing like it again on the face of the earth." Of course not, for there was no other institution that ever graduated Washington; there was no other building in this country that Sir Christopher Wren ever built; there is no other institution in which Jefferson was educated; and certainly there is none around which the shades of Milton and Sir Harry Vane and Cromwell cluster to this late date. But all these matters are

immaterial; they are the ornamental fringing; they are not the real solid facts of this case.

You establish a precedent when the Government of the United States proposes to pay for the loss and unauthorized destruction of those objects deemed sacred by the laws of war. If you pass this bill you establish that principle, nothing more, nothing less.

Now, if you establish this principle, you establish a principle that no other nation ever had the inconceivable folly and imbecility to establish since the beginning of time. Why, the whole world has been searched through and through for the like of it in vain. The graceful learning of Massachusetts has twined itself with the rugged and interesting persistence of Virginia in its search for a parallel, but to no purpose whatsoever. You may bring together Bunker Hill and Yorktown, Massachusetts and Virginia, and tie them together with all the flowers of rhetoric that ever bloomed since the Garden of Eden, but you cannot change the plain, historic fact that no nation on earth ever was so imbecile and idiotic as to establish a principle that would more nearly bankrupt its treasury after victory than after defeat.

He then proceeded to review the precedents, among them one relating to an institution of learning in Tennessee. "It was situated in a loyal country. Out of its halls had gone no officers to swell the ranks of its country's foes. From the chairs of its professors the doctrine of secession had never been preached; the surrounding population had never been tainted by it." A bill for the relief of this institution had been passed and Grant had vetoed it, saying: "If the precedent is once established that the government is liable for the ravages of war, the ends of demands upon the public treasury cannot be forecast."

He then argued that William and Mary College had suffered a loss of property in the Revolutionary War, and for seventy years had pressed the claim upon the national government, and the government had refused to entertain it. "The statesmen of that period had too much wisdom to permit this government to be connected with any principle so absurd as would be established by this bill." He said that one thousand two hundred out of four thousand two hundred bills introduced during that Congress had gone to the War Claims Committee, and other large claims had gone to other committees.

There is but a step between paying for institutions of learning and county buildings, and paying for the humble firesides of the poor; and for my own part I would rather pay for the latter than the former. Think of all these claimants translated into that magnificent upper air in which Massachusetts and Virginia, and possibly South Carolina alone can live. [*Laughter and applause.*] Just think of them in that blue empyrean, surrounded by Washington and Jefferson and dead heroes, and Milton and Sir Harry Vane — and my friend from Massachusetts here below emblazoning it all in gorgeous language.

When the claim is once passed, he said, it will be the decision people will look to and not the arguments which secured it.

The arguments will all be printed, they will make part of that great monumental pile of eloquence which Congress is rearing at the rate of ten volumes every year; but nobody will read them; while the decision will be sought for by every claim agent who loved the Lost Cause and a good many who did not.

He said that he approved of very much that had been said upon the subject of sectional feeling.

> I do believe that after the magnificent contest which shook this entire Continent, after millions of men had been in the field and fought each other face to face, it would have been a pitiful and miserable close to have had half-a-dozen struggling wretches kicking out their lives on the gallows. Now, whatever may be the question of right or wrong for any individual, the only justification of rebellion is success. It involves death to men and destruction to property. You do not need to be told its miseries, for you have suffered them. Any set of men who propose to plunge their people into these horrors are bound to be successful or take the consequences. — Why will you not, on your part, show a disposition to let bygones be bygones, and let us have rest and peace and returning prosperity.

The friends of the College denied that it was a war claim. Reed interrupted one of them to ask if he had read the title of the bill, which was, "A bill to reimburse the College of William and Mary for damages," etc. The member replied that he understood that the friends of the bill intended to change the title.

Reed: "In other words, my friend is like the deacon who was a member of a temperance society, who said he could not drink cider, but if they would call it apple juice he would drink it." [*Laughter.*]

The exact effect of Reed's speech upon the House cannot be known, but it was undoubtedly great, and the friends of the measure were not able to secure a vote upon it during that Congress.

As this was the first occasion on which Reed made

an important speech to the House, it will help to a better understanding of the quotations from his speeches given in the following pages to refer at this point to his appearance and manner of speaking. He had a massive figure. He stood about six feet two inches in height, and weighed probably two hundred and seventy-five pounds. His eyes under great arches of brow were hazel and were large and brilliant. They were such eyes as one rarely sees and stamped him unmistakably as a man of genius. He was bald, and his head and face were of such a type as to lead Henry Irving to say that he looked like the Stratford bust of Shakespeare.

He spoke slowly and with a slight drawl. His voice was powerful and penetrated to the remotest corner of the enormous hall of the House. He rarely made a gesture. There was never anything tense or heated in his manner. His sentences fell from his lips in faultless form, but as if they did that of their own accord, and without any air of precision or the least apparent effort on his own part. There was that in his look and manner, sometimes called magnetism, for want of a more definite term, which commanded the attention of the House and quickly established his sway over it even under circumstances the most adverse.

An illustration of this quality was seen in his reply later to Mr. Bourke Cockran, at a time when the latter was in the flower of his remarkable oratory. That gentleman had just taken his seat after a very passionate and eloquent speech, and there was that appearance of

exultation on his own side of the House and of dejection on the other side which is sometimes seen after a triumphant partisan speech in a great turbulent assembly like the House of Representatives. The task of replying on such an occasion was for no man except one of the first class, and even a man of the first class might need to labor for a time in order to dispel the vivid impression, and dispose the House to look at the subject from his own point of view. On this occasion Reed arose, calm in his manner and with nothing to suggest anxiety or excitement, paused a moment, leveled a slashing sarcasm at a vulnerable part of the performance which had just been witnessed, and before he had uttered two sentences he had stirred up the fighting blood of his own side and made his antagonists conscious that it was their turn to be on the defensive. He never appeared to show the slightest concern over the manner of his speaking. And powerful as he showed himself to be, one felt that he had greater strength still in reserve.

CHAPTER V

THE POTTER INVESTIGATION

The peaceable settlement of the controversy over the election of President and the inauguration of Hayes had not taken the question out of politics. The Democratic journals were constantly putting forth the claim that the electoral votes of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida had been secured for the Republican candidates through the grossest frauds. Mr. Tilden had received one hundred and eighty-four uncontested votes, or within one of the number required to elect him. It was necessary for Mr. Hayes to receive all the other votes, including those of the three states just mentioned, and the votes of those states had been counted for Mr. Hayes under the decision of the electoral commission.

Mr. Clarkson N. Potter of New York reported a series of resolutions to the House containing charges of fraud and providing for a committee to make an investigation into the election. After an exciting parliamentary struggle, continuing for four days, the resolutions were passed. The committee created by them was one of great importance. Among the Democrats who were appointed to it were the ablest men in that party. Mr. Potter was made Chairman, and among his party associates were Morrison, McMahon, and Blackburn.

In a speech in the next Congress, Reed, referring to the Democratic membership of the Committee, said:

> The household troops had been ordered up. There at the head was a polished and able gentleman, taken some years ago from our ranks, and who had voted with us often enough since to give the people the idea that he was respectable and to be trusted — a gentleman to whose fairness and impartiality in everything except his report I bear cheerful, cordial and willing witness. Next came my friend from Ohio (Mr. McMahon), keen and subtle, than whom there is no man in five kingdoms abler to dig a pit for a witness and sweetly coax him into it. And then to give a tone of chivalry to it was my friend from the Seventh District of Kentucky (Mr. Blackburn), then as now undallying and undoubting, and consequently undastardized and undamned. Time would fail me to give an Homeric catalogue of all the great souls of heroes who went down to dusty death. It is enough to say that they were the bright, consummate flower, the cream, or, to use a metaphor more suitable to the subject, the combined sweetness and strength, the very "rock and rye" of the democracy. [*Laughter.*]

That Reed had made a deep impression upon the House during his few months of service was shown by the fact that he was named as one of the four Republican members of this committee. One of his colleagues was General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts. A stronger combination than that of these two men in a rough-and-tumble political contest could not have been found. Reed once characterized Butler as "powerful, effective, courageous and full of resources, and yet seldom really victorious." [1] But General Butler was in a state of transition, at that time very far ad-

[1] *Youth's Companion*, December 8, 1898.

vanced, from the Republican to the Democratic party, and he was destined very shortly to appear as the candidate of the latter party for Governor of Massachusetts. He took a middle course in the work of the committee, and in the end made a finding which sustained the claim that Tilden had been elected. It is no disparagement of Reed's other two colleagues, whose Republicanism was above suspicion, to say that he was the best qualified of the Republican members for the particular work before the committee, and that the brunt of it fell upon him. That he was relied upon by the Republican leaders to take an important part in the cross-examination is shown by the following letter to him from Mr. John Sherman, who had been especially attacked by the Democrats for the part he had played in Louisiana as one of the so-called "visiting statesmen."

June 5th, 1878.

DEAR SIR: —

Upon comparing the alleged signature to "Exhibit A," the Weber agreement, with the genuine signature of E. A. Weber, it is apparent that the one to the agreement is a plain and palpable forgery, and, therefore, Senator Matthews will commit to your keeping the original document to base the cross-examination upon.

Press him (*a*) to the allegation of the genuineness of the signature.

You can get the original from Senator Matthews in the Senate Chamber. He will hand it to you.

Very truly yours,

JOHN SHERMAN.

HON. THOMAS B. REED.

Reed did not lack for material much more novel than that to which the public had been accustomed in connection with Southern elections. On the face of the original returns from the Louisiana parishes, the Tilden electors appeared to have been chosen by more than six thousand majority. The State Returning Board, which had judicial power, decided that there had been intimidation in certain parishes and that the colored Republicans had been so thoroughly terrorized that they were afraid to vote. The returns from these parishes were rejected. Enough votes were thus thrown out in the whole state to convert the Democratic majority of more than six thousand on the original returns into a Republican majority in excess of four thousand. The testimony was voluminous, and I shall only refer to such portions of it as will serve to show the important part played by Reed.

The principal witness for the Democrats was James E. Anderson, who had been the superintendent of registration in one of the parishes. He had been appointed as a Republican, and by virtue of his office he performed important duties, not only before the election but also after it. His official return showed that the vote in the parish had been about 2200 Democratic and none Republican. Anderson seems to have had a propensity for signing contradictory statements, and was not, to say the least, an impressive witness. In one document he declared that the election in his parish had not been fair and peaceable, but that there had been violence and intimidation, with bands of armed

men riding about whipping and shooting the voters. A few days afterwards he put forth another paper, signed also by the supervisor of another parish, declaring that the election was the most peaceable and orderly one ever witnessed by them, and that the previous statement had been signed at the request of Republican candidates and office-holders for the purpose of throwing out Democratic votes. He declared that bribes in the form of offices or money had been offered him by both sides.

With such a wealth of material Reed's cross-examination of this witness was destructive in its effect, and the climax was reached when he drew from him the admission that he had purposely misled the Senate Committee before which he had testified. The Democratic majority in its report declared that "it was unavoidable from the character of those concerned that the committee should be exposed to mistake and imposition," and expressed an opinion of Anderson that was far from favorable. In a speech made subsequently in the House Reed denounced Anderson in a very direct fashion.

It will not be necessary here to review at length the facts regarding the Presidential election as they were brought out by the Potter Committee. They would show a record of falsification of documents, of unblushing frauds, of intimidation, of bribery and attempted bribery, and even of murder, which make as disgraceful a chapter as can be found in the political history of America.

So far as the elections in Louisiana and South Carolina were concerned, there was presented one of those cases where law was arrayed against civilization, and where men, for the purpose of preventing the destruction of the latter, did not hesitate to throw the former to the winds.

But the investigation of the cipher telegrams deserves more than a passing reference, because in that investigation Reed was seen at his best as a cross-examiner, and because the disclosures made in the course of it had the effect of destroying as a practical political issue the charges of fraud in connection with the election of 1876. The cipher investigation had an enormous practical effect. The House was Democratic. The Senate was hanging in the balance. Sherman was in the midst of his work, at the time unpopular, preparing for the resumption of gold payments. The industrial crisis which began in 1873 was still resting upon the country. Strikes were common. The rapid building of railroads had brought vast areas of new land under cultivation, and the prices of agricultural products were depressed and the farmers were poor. The only thing necessary to produce a political convulsion would have been a serious dispute over the title to the presidency. And such a dispute could be academic only and not in any degree practical after the disclosures contained in the cipher telegrams. Shattered by cross-examination as had been the testimony showing frauds in Louisiana, that testimony would still have left a most disagreeable impression upon the public mind,

and popular opinion might have supported an attempt to set aside in the courts the somewhat technical and evasive decision of the Electoral Commission, a decision which did not go behind the returns to the evidence, and which had been reached by all the judges voting in the line of their respective political beliefs. But after the contents of the cipher telegrams became known all danger of a litigated title was at an end. To the new member from Maine must be accorded a large share of credit for the cross-examination with which he illuminated the case as well upon the cipher telegrams as upon the claims of fraud.

Those telegrams undoubtedly revealed an attempt to purchase enough electoral votes to make certain the election of Mr. Tilden. The excuse for the attempt was boldly avowed to be that it was justifiable to ransom stolen goods from robbers, and that it was an effort to buy back votes from the thieves who had stolen them. A large mass of dispatches had been brought before the investigating committees of the two Houses by the Western Union Telegraph Company in response to subpœnas. Most of them were in unintelligible cipher and for a considerable time little attention was paid to them. But two clever writers for the New York "Tribune" were able to translate many of them, and their contents were seen to be of a startling character. A resolution passed by the House of Representatives particularly instructed the Potter Committee to investigate these ciphers, and that work was entered upon in the most thorough fashion.

On account of the part shown to have been played by Mr. Pelton, who was Mr. Tilden's nephew and lived in his house, Reed conceived the notion that Tilden was not without responsibility in regard to them. He proposed in the House a resolution that Tilden be permitted to be represented by counsel before the Committee. This resolution was defeated. The Democratic members were not willing to concede that Tilden was on trial.

Reed in his cross-examination drew from Pelton the admission that he lived at the residence of his uncle; that he had been his military secretary for two years at Albany, when Tilden was Governor of New York; that he was not a man of large property, and did not have the sums called for by the cipher dispatches. Reed quoted from one of the mildly incriminating dispatches and asked Pelton if he showed that to his uncle. Pelton replied that he did not. Reed then observed, "I suppose it was owing to that wicked sentence in it — 'Answer to question asked this morning — important to-night' — that you did not show it."

Taking another dispatch, Reed asked Pelton if he showed that to his uncle, and he replied that he did not. Reed then asked whether his reluctance to consult his uncle in regard to it had its origin in the expression which he had put into the telegram — "The expense of what you do will be met." Pelton refused to admit that he had consulted his uncle and said it was not a matter that there was any necessity to consult him about.

You felt that you could go on and buy a State or two without consulting him?

I never consulted him about such things at all, sir.

Reed pressed the witness on the point whether Tilden saw any of the telegrams and secured the admission that he saw some.

Did he never happen to call for these wicked ones?"

He never knew of their existence.

Reed then turned to a dispatch in the translation of which occurred the sentence: "If the Returning Board can be procured absolutely, will you deposit thirty thousand dollars?" and asked, —

Did you show that to your uncle?

No, sir.

Where did you receive it?

I have no means of fixing it; but either at the Everett House or at Liberty Street.

Was not this quite a little event, this statement that a State could be bought for thirty thousand dollars, when you were rather anxious about that time to get a State?

Pelton could not fix the place where he received it. Then taking another telegram containing the question: "Shall I increase to fifty thousand if required to make sure?" Reed asked, "Did you show that to your uncle?"

"No, sir."

Referring to another dispatch which concluded: "Tell Russia [that is Tilden] to saddle Blackstone," Pelton replied to Reed that he did not remember showing that to Tilden.

Was there anything by the name of Blackstone that could be saddled about Mr. Tilden's premises?

Yes, sir, Mr. Tilden had a horse by the name of Blackstone.

Then it may have meant that he take gentle exercise, may it not?

It may.

Did you hesitate to communicate to Governor Tilden a request that was sent all the way from Florida, that he should take gentle exercise? Were you that tender of your uncle?

I think I must have taken that responsibility.

Thus throughout a long cross-examination Reed kept bringing dispatches proposing the purchase of electors, to Pelton's attention, and persisted in asking him whether Governor Tilden knew of their existence. Pelton denied that he had ever brought these dispatches to Tilden's attention.

Cooper had spoken to Tilden of the attempt to purchase the South Carolina electors, and Tilden expressed indignation, and summoned his nephew back from Baltimore. Reed then asked: —

Well, so far as you know, the scheme first received reprobation when Mr. Cooper was indiscreet enough (from your point of view) to mention it to your uncle?

That is my understanding.

It never received any reprobation until that time, when it came within the purview of your uncle's sense of propriety, and as soon as it did, it was crushed out. State how soon after that you left your uncle's house, — whether or not it was prior to the Florida negotiations?

How do you mean — left the house?

Did you not cease to reside there after the South Carolina transaction and prior to the Florida negotiations.

No, sir.

Then you carried on the Florida negotiations while you resided in your uncle's house?

Yes, sir.

And you did it after this pointed rebuke which you had received from your uncle for your conduct in the South Carolina matter?

Yes, sir.

And in defiance of his wishes?

Yes, sir.

Then at the time the Florida transaction was entered into, you knew that your uncle, as the Democratic candidate for the presidency, disapproved of it on moral grounds, and you knew that Mr. Cooper, who was Treasurer of the Democratic National Committee, also objected to it on moral grounds?

Yes, objected to it.

Where then, did you intend to get the money to do the Florida business with?

Well, I intended when the matter was consummated, to lay it before the National Committee and let them take such action as they chose.

What, after this conversation with Mr. Cooper?

Yes.

Mr. Manton Marble had written a letter known as the "Ark and Shekina letter," charging Republicans with attempting to use money; and cipher telegrams were afterwards produced from Mr. Marble himself which seriously required explanation. Referring to a meeting between Marble and Pelton, after the return of the former from Florida, and pointing his questions with quotations from the "Ark and Shekina" letter, Reed asked if Marble told the witness anything about "traces of money payment being darkly visible" or anything of that sort; or did he not use that language in private conversation; and did the witness and Marble

talk about what might be the consequences if the matter "got into the keen bright sunlight of publicity"; and did he say anything to witness about the "final citadel of power," or about the "ague-smitten parish" that might be bought; and "when you and he met, how broad a smile did you have on your countenance?"

Mr. Tilden afterwards appeared as a witness before the Committee and denied any complicity in the telegrams or in the transactions to which they related.

Reed's part in the investigation was conspicuous enough to win for him the enthusiastic approval of the newspapers of his party and the unsparing denunciation of the Democratic journals. His handling of the ciphers, and his wringing from the most important witness against him in the Louisiana case admissions extremely damaging, gave little support to their criticisms that he played the rôle of a shyster, that he was ill-trained and had little adaptability of mind.

In making its decision the Committee was divided upon party lines, each member finding in accordance with the position of his party, excepting General Butler, who took a middle ground, although he vindicated Sherman.

The following portions of the minority report were very evidently written by Reed: "When the parties to the attempted bribery were put upon the stand, they were forced to admit the receipt and transmission of the criminating dispatches, each and all of them." After speaking of the part played by the chief parties, the report proceeded: —

The idea that this penniless man, Mr. Pelton, living in the house and seated at the very table of his wealthy uncle, Mr. Tilden, should have conducted negotiations involving such large sums without word or hint to the man most deeply interested, or to anybody else, cannot for a moment be entertained by candid men.

It has been urged in Mr. Tilden's behalf, that as soon as he became aware of the South Carolina negotiations he promptly suppressed them, and we are asked to draw the inference that he was guiltless of all.

Had these transactions ceased when Hardy Solomons went home, had Pelton been discharged from his plenary superintendence of Mr. Tilden's affairs, there might have been some show of reason in this plea. But Mr. Pelton remained in full control, the Florida negotiations went on, the attempted bribery in Oregon followed, all under the guidance of the resident nephew, Mr. Pelton. . . . Pelton says he told Cooper not to tell Tilden. That night, Cooper did not, but on reflection the next day, probably thinking that he had already over-advanced, and that if Mr. Tilden wanted the presidency in that way he had better pay for it himself, he went to Mr. Tilden. Of course Mr. Tilden could take part in no such open transaction as it had now become. Colonel Pelton was called home, a wiser and more secretive man."

The report concludes by giving reasons in favor of the claim that the Republicans honestly carried Louisiana. It referred to the well-known violence that had taken place and to the undisputed Democratic circular issued during the campaign in Louisiana, advising the parade of Democratic clubs on horseback and their marching as organized bodies to the central rendezvous, for the purpose of impressing the negroes with the sense of their united strength, and recommending a systematic warning to the negroes that "We

have the means of carrying the election and mean to use them."

The report of the Democratic majority of the Committee was to the effect that Tilden had carried the state. As to the cipher telegrams, their conclusion was that while Tilden's particular friends were concerned in the transaction, he had nothing to do with them, but that there was a display of "mistaken zeal of his followers and friends without authority on his part." The report was not presented to the House until very nearly the end of the Congress and no formal debate took place upon it.

As a campaign topic, the election of 1876 received far less discussion after the investigation of the Committee than before it. That this was true was due doubtless to the disclosures, and especially those relating to the cipher telegrams. The subject however was occasionally discussed in the House, and during the next Congress Reed made a brief and most effective speech in reply to Mr. Davis, a Democrat from North Carolina, who had introduced the subject into the debate. Reed said that he was pained to hear the matter opened again, but that time did not seem to assuage the grief of the Democrats.

> The attitude which they have assumed for the last four years reminds me very much of a dog that I once owned. After going out into the street and getting a complete and thorough thrashing from a bigger and worthier dog, he used to come into the house and lay down on the hearth, and then with one paw rub one damaged ear and growl, and with the other paw rub the other ear and growl, and then he would rub

his scarred and unhappy nose and growl, and feel bad generally. [*Laughter.*] Now, I am in hopes that time, after a sufficient lapse of it, may cure them, as it has cured him. [A member interrupted to ask: "The dog is cured now?"] REED: He is dead. [*Great laughter.*] There never was a baser thing in the history of this or any other country than the fraud lamentation which has been revived so eloquently and so melodiously by the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Davis. . . . You can always tell something of the material of which the house is built by inspecting a portion of it. I had occasion to investigate one parish. — I want gentlemen to draw their own inferences. I will not draw one, nor will I state a fact that either side can deny or dispute. In the parish of East Feliciana in the State of Louisiana, in the year between 1874 and 1876, there were fourteen persons murdered, and that fact no man doubts; no man can dispute it. The Democrats say that it was on account of cotton-seed stealing, and personal difficulties. The Republicans say that these murders were political. On these two points men differ, but here are the other facts equally undisputed. First, every man who was killed was a Republican; second, cotton-seed stealing and murder simultaneously ceased on election day; third, in 1874 that parish cast 1600 Republican votes against 800 Democratic — two to one. And in 1876, after these murders had taken place, there were 1700 registered Democratic votes, 400 unregistered, and one for Rutherford B. Hayes.

A member insisted on interrupting Reed, to ask the question whether a committee of the House had not reported that the election in 1874 was free and fair, to which Reed made the reply: —

I answer very distinctly, that was the very year when the Republican vote in that parish was two to one as compared with the Democratic vote. I think it very possible that that may have been a fair election. Now, having embalmed that fly in the liquid amber of my discourse, I wish to proceed.

There is evidence worth considering, to the effect that the investigation was not intended to be academic, but had the practical purpose of laying a foundation for a contest. The secretary of the Republican Congressional Committee made the charge that it was the intention "to attempt the revolutionary expulsion of the President from his office." Mr. Blaine in the Senate, on March 24, 1879, in effect charged that it had been the intention of the Democrats, in entering upon the Potter investigation, "to remove the President if they could prove fraud." In reply to Blaine two Democratic senators, Eaton and Hill, declared that no revolution was intended, but only an orderly procedure in the courts in pursuance of the provisions of the act establishing the Electoral Commission, and Hill admitted that it was a purpose of the Potter Committee to get material for use in the courts.

Whatever other result the investigation may have had, it caused the fraud issue to disappear from politics, and while an attempt was made to revive it in subsequent campaigns, it did not amount to a vital issue. The investigation resulted in giving Reed prominence throughout the country. He received praise from the Republican journals for the ability which he had displayed in the cross-examination of witnesses, and on the other hand he was a good deal abused by the Democratic journals for the same reason. But his hold upon his district was strengthened, and while the investigation had not proceeded very far when he appeared for reëlection in September, 1878, his appoint-

ment upon such an important committee and the success with which he took part in its work touched the local pride of his constituency, and he was reëlected without difficulty.

CHAPTER VI

REED'S SECOND CONGRESS — HIS PROGRESS TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

REED's attitude on the money question drew upon him the opposition of the Greenback orators, and gave him serious trouble, not indeed in the campaign of 1878, but in the one immediately succeeding it. The cause of greenbackism secured a strong foothold in Maine. After repeated attempts to issue more paper money, and then to repeal the Resumption Act, attempts which had been defeated only by the veto, the opinion of the country was waiting to witness the effect of the operation of resumption which was to be put in force the first of January, 1879.

The administration of the Treasury under President Hayes had been above criticism. Our national bonds to an enormous amount had been refunded at a much lower rate of interest. Gold had been gradually piled up so that the reserve of a hundred millions might be in the vaults of the Treasury at the time resumption should take effect. The operations of the Treasury were greatly aided by the condition of the revenue, which was sufficient to pay all the expenses of the government including the interest upon the debt, and to leave a comfortable surplus each year. When gold payments were finally resumed, public confidence was

shown to be such that the demand upon the government for coin in exchange for greenbacks was very slight, and the voluntary deposit of coin for notes very large. Whether or not the remarkable revival of business was due to gold payments, it was unquestionably true that concurrently with resumption such a revival occurred, and under it the revenues of the government were destined to make astonishing gains. Before the end of President Arthur's administration the revenue became so great that less than two thirds of it was required to meet the expenses of the government and more than one third was clear surplus. The principal of the public debt was paid off with great rapidity, and the currency seemed at last to have attained a solid foundation.

The standard of value, however, was not so easily settled. There was one disturbing factor, not generally appreciated at the time, which was destined to grow stronger and finally to make necessary another great struggle. The first Congress of which Reed was a member had, against his earnest opposition, passed a bill adding to the coinage over two million silver dollars each month. This dollar was of the same weight and fineness as the dollar which had been demonetized in 1873, and it was made legal tender. The silver it contained was not equal in value to the bullion value of the gold dollar, and as the number of these silver dollars increased, their bullion value diminished. They were a charge upon the gold reserve, which had been provided for the greenbacks alone. But the silver diffi-

culty was to reach its climax when Reed had become the unquestioned leader of his party in the House, and we shall see how he dealt with it.

In his first Congress Reed had displayed an interest in questions relating to the Indians and made a speech in which he resented the attempt to encroach upon the Indian lands. He insisted that the treaties with the Indians should be respected and that they should not be robbed of their lands even although a fine pretext was put forward, as is usually done when it is necessary to cover a breach of public faith. "I am glad, at least," he said, "to see that there is grace enough left in this matter to sugar it over with pleasant phraseology. I am glad to see that no member of this House makes a proposition to take land away from people who own it unless he can convince his mind that the handsome phrase 'the march of civilization' will cover the occasion as well as the country." But jurisdiction over the Indians was generally exercised by the Committee on Indian Affairs, and only in exceptional instances did the questions relating to them come before the Committee on Territories, of which he was a member. The other work of that committee did not especially interest him. He probably expressed his view of his own fitness for its work when, in a later House, of which he was Speaker, he was asked by a member from a large city for an appointment to the Committee on Territories. Reed expressed surprise at the request and asked, "What do you want to be appointed on the Committee on Territories for? You

would not know a territory if you met one walking down Pennsylvania Avenue."

The Forty-Sixth Congress, the second of which Reed was a member, was Democratic by a small majority, and Randall was again elected Speaker. Garfield was for a second time made the Republican candidate for the office and retained his position as minority leader. That there had been little relative change in the strength of the two parties was shown by the vote for Speaker, Randall's plurality over Garfield being only two larger than in the preceding Congress. Among the new members were Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, Levi P. Morton of New York, Henry H. Bingham of Pennsylvania, and Benjamin Butterworth of Ohio. The Greenback party appeared with fourteen members, one of whom was Mr. Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, afterwards Vice-President of the United States.

This Congress was called in extraordinary session by the President, as had been the previous one, because of the failure to pass some of the regular appropriation bills, of which the army bill was one.

In the organization of the House, Reed secured a promotion and was put on the Judiciary Committee, an appointment generally sought by the lawyers of the House. Among his Republican colleagues on the committee were William McKinley of Ohio and George D. Robinson, afterwards Governor of Massachusetts. Reed's experience in the preceding Congress on the Committee on Territories had not been

such apparently as to lead him to wish to continue on it.

In addition to the subjects dealt with by the Judiciary Committee, Reed displayed a deep interest in all matters of parliamentary procedure. The brief colloquies in which he took part show that he was constantly making a study of the mechanism of the House, and was carefully scrutinizing the manner in which it operated and transacted its business, and he soon became unequaled as a parliamentarian, not perhaps in his definite knowledge of the numerous precedents in the history of the House, but in his broad comprehension of its workings and of the anatomy of its structure.

His great achievement as a parliamentarian was to be the establishment of a system under which the House could effectively do business, and he arrived at that position by aiding to demonstrate, while a member of the minority, how the House under its rules could be prevented from doing business. With the other members of his own party, and indeed with nearly all members of all minority parties in the history of the House, he engaged in filibustering. This practice was a very common one during the first Congresses in which Reed served, and it was not only resorted to on solemn occasions but was sometimes indulged in upon measures of comparatively trivial importance. The method of filibustering commonly pursued was for the minority members to refuse to respond on the roll-call, on some measure or motion obnoxious to them, and thus to

destroy the quorum. The House would then embark upon another roll-call to ascertain whether a quorum was present, and it would sometimes proceed to "compel the attendance of absent members," who would be brought to the bar of the House in custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and after excuses, usually frivolous, for their absence, would be ordered discharged from arrest.

Reed himself was once brought to the bar in custody. He made a mock excuse, in the course of which he said: "In any other assembly than this I should expect an apology; but under the circumstances I am willing to be released, and call it square at that." After it appeared on the roll-call that a quorum was present, the roll would again be called on the obnoxious piece of business and again the minority members would sit silent and no progress would be made. On the call of the House the quorum would reappear, only to vanish again when a forward step was to be taken on the measure before the House. Thus business would sometimes be delayed by a fruitless round of roll-calls until the majority would surrender by dropping the pending legislation, or until by an extraordinary effort it would be able to marshal a quorum from its own ranks.

On January 28, 1880, Reed defended the commonly accepted construction of the constitutional provision regarding the quorum, which construction he was afterwards to overthrow. "It is not the visible presence of members," he said, "but their judgment and

their votes that the Constitution calls for." The privilege not to vote "is a privilege which every minority has availed itself of since the foundation of the government." The minority could upon great occasions demand that every bill should "receive the absolute vote of a majority of the members elected." They would make this demand "in the face and eyes of the country." If the demand was made on a frivolous occasion it would be subject to public censure. "It is a valuable privilege for the country that the minority shall have the right by this extraordinary mode of proceeding to call the attention of the country to measures which a party in a moment of madness and of party feeling is endeavoring to force."

This speech was made early in his career and simply presented the traditional arguments in favor of the practice. He was, at a later time in his service, to resort again to filibustering of this sort, but for the avowed purpose of compelling such a change of procedure as would amount to a recognition of the fact that the test of the constitutional quorum is whether a majority of members is actually present and not whether a majority has answered on the calling of the roll.

During this session, after a long parliamentary wrangle, a Democratic member moved to refer the subject under consideration to a "committee on common sense." Said Reed, "That would be a partisan committee, all from this side." The next day, referring to party government, he said: "The best system is to have one party govern and the other party watch, and on general

principles I think it would be better for us to govern and the Democrats to watch."

The approach of the general election of 1880 caused the two parties to subordinate all the business of the House to the manufacture of political capital for campaign purposes. A portion of the national election laws providing for the presence of deputy United States marshals at the polls afforded a theme for the most passionate declamation. On the one side it was urged that the marshals constituted a force of mercenaries which the administration might use to intimidate and coerce voters, and on the other that they were necessary to prevent fraud and violence of the worst kind. Although the use of these officials at the polls was prescribed by law, many Democrats resisted making the appropriations to pay them, while the extreme Republican view was somewhat luridly expressed by a member who said: —

> The Democratic majority has found its way into this hall by the light of burning homes and blazing churches — its bloody footprints stain the very steps of the Capitol. — By this means you have secured both branches of Congress. Now the presidency is to be attained, but how? Nullify the election laws, you say. Give us free fraud and no special deputy marshals to detect us in our crimes.[1]

The Republicans, including Reed, supported the provision for the deputy marshals, although Reed took no part in the debate.

[1] Speech of Representative Julius C. Burrows of Michigan in the House.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREENBACK ISSUE — RELATIONS WITH BLAINE

The presence in the House of so many members elected as out-and-out Greenbackers served to put emphasis on the money question, and the campaign which followed showed very strongly the influence of the forces favoring the free coinage of silver or further issues of greenbacks. But the money issue was not squarely joined in the general election of 1880, as indeed it had never been in any presidential election, even when the sentiment for inflation was at its height. In different states it found its way to the front, but there was no national alignment. There had been much overheated declamation on the subject, but there were other issues that overshadowed it and diverted public attention. The distribution of the political control of the states was such that neither party felt that it could afford to make the issue in its national platform. New York was the pivotal state in a general election, and the importance of carrying it shaped the attitude of both the great parties on the money question. The influence of the business interests in that state was very powerful, and indeed controlling. No party could hope to carry it in favor of what was called "soft money." The standard of our money was never

squarely made an issue in a presidential campaign until 1896.

But Maine was one of the states in which the sentiment for the greenback was very strong, and the strength of that sentiment very nearly cost Reed his seat. He had never sought to conceal his attitude on the money question or to imitate the course of some conspicuous politicians by assuming a position that would appeal to both sides. He was uncompromisingly against inflation and spoke strongly against it both in the House and in his own state. Solon Chase was the real leader of the Greenbackers of Maine, and this political evangelist made himself famous throughout the country by his quaint and homely way of arguing the question. His favorite illustration of the evils of the contraction of the currency was to point to its effect in reducing the price of his cattle, which he referred to as "them steers"; and "them steers" came into vogue far outside of Maine as a part of the political lingo of the time. Chase made very taking appeals to the rank and file of the voters and he could not be ignored. Reed's references to Chase were somewhat in the latter's style, as may be seen from the following version of a speech he made at Lewiston. He argued that the only successful kind of currency was one "payable in coin at the will of the holder." It was no new thing to dream of a "paper paradise." It had been tried by every civilized nation, and "it has always led to the pit of destruction." A small town in Maine worth not more than ten thousand dollars had voted

to raise one hundred thousand dollars to repair the roads and "to pay a man and a yoke of oxen fifty dollars a day to work on the highways. What a place that would have been for Solon and his steers! Solon ought to have been there. It would have been so much happier for him. To-day there's a heap of trouble on the old man's mind. Here is a paradise already created for the peripatetic Greenbacker and the millennium already descended." A breakfast cost one hundred dollars in Buenos Ayres, and "in Hayti they actually have dollars three for a cent."

The old county feud had broken out again in this campaign and a conference of Republicans from ten towns of York County had been held in Biddeford in May, 1880, to oppose Reed's renomination and put a York man in his place. The conference however developed strong support for Reed. One man wrote that he had opposed Reed's first nomination and was opposed also to all the men he had tried to put in office. "But there is something higher than all this. . . . Mr. Reed is the ablest man of his age in Congress and he has won a national reputation as one of the foremost men there." The movement for a York man did not assume large proportions and Reed was easily nominated. But the contest for the election was very close. In the preceding state election, the "Fusionists," composed of Democrats and Greenbackers, had carried the state, and the famous "count out" by the Governor and Council was vainly directed to secure the Legislature to the same combination. In a letter writ-

ten just after the "count out," to William B. Tobey, Reed had denounced it and declared that "the pretences on which it has been done are as frivolous as the crime is gigantic." He declared that Portland had been disfranchised because its clerk "returned scattering votes." The votes of other places had been rejected on account of pretexts no less frivolous. Cherryfield was "of no account in this government of the people because one of the selectmen was born across the border." The omission of an *h* in "John Burnham's name is fatal, while his fusion competitor, Alfred Cushman, sails in under the name of 'Alford' without the faintest difficulty."

The principal occupation of the voter in Maine at that time appears to have been politics. The prospect of having the government relieve poverty and perhaps dispense with the necessity of labor presented an Eldorado to the imaginations of the Greenbackers. It inspired not only their orators but their poets also. They anticipated the fervent rhetoric of a later time in their denunciation of financial institutions and, generally, of the rich. A correspondent of the New York "Evening Post," writing to his paper from Portland, preserved the following verses which he had heard sung at a Greenback lecture: —

Thou, Greenback, 't is of thee,
Fair money of the free,
  Of thee we sing.
And through all coming time,
Great bards in every clime
Will sing with joyful rhyme,
  Gold is not King.

Then smash old Shylock's bonds
With all his gold coupons,
The banks and rings.
Monopolies must fail,
Rich paupers work in jail,
The right will then prevail,
Not money kings.

A Greenback orator followed Reed into one of his meetings and interrupted him to dispute one of his statements. Reed reaffirmed it. "Well," said the Greenback orator, "I want to state that I have the law in my satchel which says that banks cannot bank on less than five per cent bonds." "Law in his satchel!" replied Reed; "if this gentleman would only have less law in his satchel and more in his head, he would be a much more useful and reliable citizen."

A campaign like this was sure to become personal, and in that particular Reed was at no disadvantage. Speaking of the Greenback orators who had swarmed over the state in a previous campaign, he said there was

a bankrupt Massachusetts speculator who had lost all his own money and came to Maine to tell us how to save our credit. There was a barber who had run the gamut of all parties and all religions to get an audience and had never been able to hold one except the poor unfortunate he was lathering in the chair. With these came a swarm of utterly unknown men, who had neither a local habitation nor a name, — not even the luxury of a post-office address. And yet some of these fellows deceived the very elect.

Much more of the same sort might be quoted from Reed's speeches during this campaign. He was well aware that he was in a desperate fight and he knew the seductive quality of the Greenback appeals. All his

resources of wit, eloquence, argument, and invective he called into play. He managed to secure an election, but only by one hundred and nine votes, which was much the smallest plurality he ever received. It is true that his support was weakened by a squabble over a post-office, but the influence of this contest was insignificant compared with that of the money question. The narrowness of the plurality tempted his antagonist to enter a contest for the seat and carry it to the House of Representatives.

Maine was a "September State," so far as the election of its state officers and members of Congress was concerned, and it was therefore the theater of a bitter contest. Each party did its utmost to secure a favorable result, for effect on the country at the general voting in November. But the election in Maine was hardly better for the Republicans than a drawn battle. It did not indicate the decisive victory they were destined to win in the November election, when they chose the President and a majority of the House of Representatives, retained control of the Senate, and for the first time since the election of 1872 gave to the same party the presidency and both houses of Congress.

Reed was one of a party of Maine men who went to the Republican National Convention in Chicago, in 1880, in the interest of the nomination of Blaine for the presidency. Garfield was finally chosen by the transfer to him of the Blaine strength. Reed was a warm friend of Garfield, for whom he had voted as Speaker of the House and under whom as leader he

had served. Garfield was better fitted for service in a parliamentary body than as an executive officer. He was ready and eloquent in debate and he led his party in the House with brilliancy and yet with good judgment. Reed admired him as a parliamentarian and expressed the opinion that he was the ablest debater with whom he had served in the House of Representatives; and he most heartily supported him when he was made the candidate of his party for president.[1]

Although the relations between Blaine and Reed were not those of close intimacy, and they sometimes disagreed upon questions relating to the politics of Maine, they were usually found acting together, and Reed was faithful to Blaine during the years when the latter was the leader of his party in the nation and when his position as leader was made difficult by opposition within his own ranks. Reed was generous in the expression of admiration for Blaine's talents on more than one occasion. He once said of him: "His rush was very hard to withstand; he never paused to defend and never ceased to attack." He would sometimes indulge in a little sarcasm at Blaine's expense. Senator Lodge, in an article in the "Century Magazine," says that he chanced to meet Reed on State Street, Boston, just

[1] Of Blaine's eulogy on Garfield, Reed wrote in an article in the *Youth's Companion:* "The task was not easy, for Mr. Blaine had to satisfy both the critical audience there present, who knew where Garfield was not strong, and the greater audience, beyond, who were filled with the accumulated pity and regret of many long weary and anxious days of waiting by the bedside of the dying man. Both are gone. They were both mighty in their day and generation."

after Blaine's nomination in 1884, and asked him what he thought of it. "Well," replied Reed, "it is a great comfort to think that the wicked politicians were not allowed to pick the candidate, and that the nomination was made by the people. The politicians would have been guided only by a base desire to win."

Whatever other estimate may be placed upon Blaine, he was one of the most vital, as he was one of the most unfortunate, figures in our political history. Soon after his accession to the speakership in 1869, he was destined to achieve a popularity possessed by no other man in his party, and for twenty years he shone in that respect without a rival. In the Republican convention of 1876, in the face of personal attacks of unexampled bitterness, and in spite of the opposition of the national administration, he received upon different ballots the votes of a majority of all the delegates, and only failed of a nomination to the presidency by the merest accident. In 1880 he was strong enough against Grant and Conkling to dictate the nominee of the Convention. In 1884 he was made the candidate of his party and escaped election by the narrowest of margins and as a result of the grotesque political blunder of an aged clergyman. Four years afterwards he would have received the votes of two-thirds of the members of the National Convention of his party had he not forbidden the use of his name. That he should for so many years have been the most conspicuous statesman and the real leader of his party, at a period when, in the intelligence and public spirit of its rank and file,

it was unsurpassed in the history of great parties, affords striking proof of the brilliancy of his qualities and of the hold he had upon the popular imagination. In the character of his popularity he was on a level with Henry Clay, and in the quality of what he said he was certainly at no disadvantage with the latter. The Little Rock incident in which he was involved was sufficiently unfortunate, even without exaggeration. But its significance was magnified by the partisan animosity of critics who supplemented the known facts by conjectures of their own, in order to draw against him the most damaging conclusions and who reserved standards of judgment for him which they refrained from applying to their political friends.

CHAPTER VIII

WINNING LEADERSHIP — SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN — GENEVA AWARD DISTRIBUTIONS

With the assembling of the Forty-Seventh Congress Reed found himself for the first time in his service a member of the majority in the House. He had gained for himself such a favorable reputation that he was urged by many friends to become a candidate for Speaker. In addition to his party colleagues from Maine, a majority of the Republicans of the Massachusetts delegation and members from other New England states as well as from some of the Western states were favorable to his candidacy. It was urged for Reed in one of the leading journals that he was "a man of uncommon intellectual activity and of growing power." It was urged against him by another that he was "too sharp of tongue" and that his seat was contested. The movement in his favor was sufficiently marked to attract the attention and antagonism of the Democratic newspapers. One of them declared him to be "an overgrown boy, who has not mastered the rudiments of the manual." [1]

Godlove S. Orth of Indiana was also a candidate for the office, and wrote Reed a letter in regard to his candidacy to which Reed rather diplomatically replied:

[1] Washington dispatch to the New York *Sun*. The same dispatch impartially castigated all the other Republican candidates.

"There will be nothing in the contest for the Speakership to change my good-will towards you. In fact I hope the result may be such as to increase it and to put into my hands power and opportunity to show my appreciation of your standing and of your service to the party."

General Keifer of Ohio easily won the nomination for Speaker in the Republican caucus, and on account of the support of the so-called Readjuster members, aided by the absence of some of the Democrats, he was elected by a much larger plurality than he could have received on a straight party vote. Indeed, in his speech accepting the office he declared that no party in either House of Congress had an absolute majority over all the other parties. It was difficult to classify a few of the members, who might be called Greenbackers or Republicans, and there was a small group from Virginia known as Readjusters. There was, however, apparently a clear Republican majority of one over all other parties, which was sufficiently small to be responsible for plenty of excitement. It was the first Republican House, if Republican it could be called, that had been elected since 1872. Nelson Dingley of Maine appeared for the first time as a member. James W. Wadsworth and Perry Belmont appeared from New York and Andrew G. Curtin, the War-Governor of Pennsylvania, from that state. Abram S. Hewitt was returned again from New York, after an interruption in his service.

The first important discussion at this session in

which Reed took part related to the right of the member-elect from Utah to his seat. It was proposed that the man who had been elected should not be seated because he was a polygamist, and that the candidate who had run against him and received only a small proportion of the vote should be admitted in his stead. Reed moved that the subject be referred to the Committee on Elections. The motion was made the occasion for much lurid oratory. One member was in favor of seating the man who had not received the votes, because to scrutinize his claim would be in favor of "that scarlet-robed harlot that sits enthroned amid the hills of Utah." Mr. Cox of New York took the other side, quoting from Scripture, and referred to the order of the Emperor of Japan for a parliament. Reed then took the floor and made a speech in which serious argument and sarcasm were effectively blended.

> I am well aware [*he said*] of the misfortune under which I labor in being obliged to present a purely legal argument after such coruscations of eloquence as those which have been rayed forth by the gentlemen from New York, flashing and booming as they did from Japan to Jerusalem. This whole question is one apart from any question of polygamy or politics. The Republican party has for twenty years stood pledged to put down both slavery and polygamy. One half of its duty it has performed without the assistance of my friend from New York [Mr. Cox]; for the other half we are promised his assistance and I have no doubt we shall be able to accomplish it in much less time.

But injustice could never be put down by injustice. The evidence showed that the one candidate received eighteen thousand votes and the other candidate

thirteen hundred. He then argued that under the law of elections the disqualification of the majority candidate would not seat the minority candidate. His motion prevailed by 189 votes to 24.

President Garfield did not live to witness the assembling of Congress after his accession to the presidency. He was assassinated by a man who was probably mad and whose mind had been still further unbalanced by a struggle over office which resulted in a serious division in the party, destined to continue until after the succeeding presidential election. President Arthur, who had succeeded to the office, sent his first annual message at the opening of the Congress. The document was largely devoted to financial subjects and brought out the startling fact that out of the Government's total annual revenue of $360,000,000, $100,000,000 was surplus. He estimated that the surplus for the ensuing year would reach $130,000,000, or more than a third of the entire revenue. He therefore recommended the repeal of certain internal taxes. He also pointed to the rapid accumulation of silver dollars in the Treasury, of which the law required the coinage of great numbers each year, and which persisted in remaining on the hands of the government. He called for the repeal of the law, and a provision that in the future only enough silver dollars should be coined to supply the demand. These recommendations portended a continuance of the fierce struggles over the monetary standard, and a renewal of the contest over the tariff. But the former question was sufficiently

vital to force itself into discussion, and would doubtless have come to the front of its own force; and the plethoric condition of the Treasury alone was sufficient to compel a consideration of taxation laws.

When the committee assignments were announced it was seen that Reed was made the Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, which was third in importance among the committee assignments in the House, being outranked only by the chairmanships of Ways and Means and of Appropriations. That he should have won this appointment after only four years of service in the House afforded striking proof of the rapidity with which he had risen in the estimation of his associates. Early in the session Mr. Godlove S. Orth of Indiana, who had been appointed to the Committee on Rules, resigned as a protest against his committee assignments. Reed was appointed to fill this vacancy on Rules, which in those days was perhaps the most important political committee in the House. Its importance may be judged of from its membership which was composed of the Speaker, Mr. Reed, Mr. George M. Robeson, Mr. Randall, and Mr. Blackburn.

Mr. Orth still further expressed his dissatisfaction with his committee assignments by proposing a rule that the committees be appointed by a board of eleven members to be elected by the House. Since the first Congress the rules of the House had always provided that the committees should be appointed by the Speaker. Reed made a speech against the proposed

rule. He said that he should protest vigorously against the plan if he thought "there was the slightest chance of its adoption by this or any other House." Whatever complaint could be made of appointments of committees by pressure upon the Speaker could be made with redoubled force against appointments made by the proposed board. "Think of the Speakership of this House going into commission! Think of the log-rolling there would be in order to get such a board as would favor various measures that might be presented, supposing always that there was in the House the danger of the suggested corruption or ruin. What modest, good men the board would have to be! They would have to pass self-denying ordinances and resist the temptation to shine as members of Judiciary, Appropriations, Ways and Means, and Foreign Affairs." The action of a committee, Reed argued, was under the scrutiny of the House, and when one was appointed out of accord with the wishes of members it became an object of suspicion; the Speaker was not only under the constant supervision of public opinion but also under the supervision of the House.

The Speaker submitted to the House the question whether the proposed Orth rule was in order, and the House by a large majority voted in the negative.

Reed as the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee brought in a bill on January 25, 1882, to permit Justice Hunt of the Supreme Court, who was incapacitated for service, to retire and receive the judiciary pension. The passage of the bill was opposed, and the debate

which ensued will serve to show Reed's conservative attitude toward the judiciary. The contract with a judge who was appointed for life, he argued, was to be taken as an entirety. It was an easy matter sitting in the House in health and comfort to talk about the duty of a judge "to resign the salary which by law belongs to him for life, and go out to poverty and discomfort," when he was utterly incapacitated from supporting himself. He knew how easy it was to set up lofty standards of human action; but he had noticed also that the lofty standard was set up "by those who do not have to carry it into actual battle." When he heard men making unreasonable demands on human nature he had "a dreadful suspicion that their actions would not be equal to their talk," if the case was their own. The House passed the bill.

A few days later, in a discussion on an appropriation bill, Reed confessed that as he gained more experience in the House he was dropping the prejudices he brought with him, not rapidly, but "I find them disappearing gradually." Among the prejudices he held when he entered Congress was one "against talking for the benefit of the County of Buncombe, but I am entirely satisfied that was a mistake." Whether grievances were reasonable or imaginary, "there is nothing that shows the right of things like a statement for and against."

Early in the session Reed reported to the House from the Committee on Rules a resolution for a select Committee on Woman Suffrage. The resolution was adopted

by 115 votes to 84. Among those voting with Reed in favor of the resolution were Cannon, McKinley, and Dingley. Reed was an earnest believer in conferring the ballot upon women. Although somewhat out of chronological order it is perhaps well at this point to refer to a minority report on woman's suffrage, made not long afterwards from the Committee on the Judiciary. The report, or more properly the "views of the minority," bears the names of four members of the committee of which his name was first. It was written by Reed.[1]

The report was in favor of a proposed amendment to the Constitution, providing that the right of citizens to vote should not be denied or abridged on account of sex. It set forth that no one who listened to the reasons

> given by the superior class for the continuance of any system of subjection can fail to be impressed with the noble disinterestedness of mankind. When the subjection of persons of African descent was to be maintained, the good of those persons was always the main object. When it was the fashion to beat children, to regard them as little animals who had no rights, it was always for their good that they were treated with severity, and never on account of the bad temper of their parents. Hence, when it is proposed to give to the women of this country an opportunity to present their case to the various state legislatures, to demand of the people of the country equality of political rights, it is not surprising to find that the reasons on which the continuance of the inferiority of women is urged, are drawn almost

[1] The style of the report very clearly proves its authorship. I have it also on the authority of his daughter, Mrs. Katherine Reed Balentine, that her father was the author.

entirely from a tender consideration of their own good. The anxiety felt lest they should thereby deteriorate, would be an honor to human nature were it not an historical fact that the same sweet solicitude has been put up as a barrier against every progress which women have made since civilization began.

If suffrage were a right, if one man had no claim to govern another man

except to the extent that the other man has a right to govern him, then there can be no discussion of the question of woman suffrage. No reason on earth can be given by those who claim suffrage as a right of manhood which does not make it a right of womanhood also. If the suffrage is to be given man to protect him in his life, liberty and property, the same reasons urge that it be given to woman, for she has the same life, liberty, and property to protect. If it be urged that her interests are so bound up in those of man that they are sure to be protected, the answer is that the same argument was urged as to the merging in the husband of the wife's right of property, and was pronounced by the judgment of mankind fallacious in practice and in principle. If the natures of men and women are so alike that for this reason no harm is done by suppressing women, what harm can be done by elevating them to equality? If their natures be different, what right can there be in refusing representation to those who might take juster views about many social and political questions?

It was undoubtedly true that women exercised strong political influence through their husbands and brothers, —

But that is just the kind of influence which is not wholesome for the community, for it is influence unaccompanied by responsibility. . . .

We conclude then that every reason which in this country bestows the ballot upon man is equally applicable to the proposition to bestow the ballot upon woman; that in our

judgment there is no foundation for the fear that woman will thereby become unfitted for all the duties she has hitherto performed.

On March 14, 1882, the Chinese Exclusion bill came before the House. Reed took his place among the opponents of the measure and voted first to reduce the term of exclusion from twenty years to ten, and finally voted against the bill altogether. It was vetoed by President Arthur on the ground, among others, that it was in violation of our treaty with China, and imposed an unreasonable limitation. Another bill was then passed, making the limit ten years, for which Reed voted and which was signed by the President.

On May 6, 1882, a tariff-commission bill was brought forward for action. Reed supported it, but took no particular part in the discussion except upon an amendment to the effect that no member of the commission should receive any compensation except that provided in the bill, under penalty of fine and imprisonment. Reed said that the purpose of the amendment was not to provide any safeguards for the members of the commission or for the country, but "to inflict an insulting imputation" upon them even before they were appointed, and by inference "to throw odium upon the very appointment of a commission." The amendment was defeated and the commission bill passed.

One of the most important bills of this Congress related to the distribution of the Geneva Award. Reed had charge of the measure and engineered its passage through the House. Although that historic

tribunal had rendered its decision more than eight years before, less than half the award had been distributed and there still remained over nine million dollars of the amount in the National Treasury. The tribunal had made the award to the United States, and not to the particular interests suffering from the depredations of the Confederate cruisers which had been fitted out in the home ports of Great Britain or in the ports of her colonies. Although the sum was thus awarded in gross, the obligation was upon the nation equitably to distribute it. This proved to be a very difficult task. A distribution of part of the sum had been ordered in 1874, and from that time until Reed reported the bill for the final distribution Congress after Congress had struggled with the subject and had reached no conclusion. It was one of those questions which in our country are apt to become chronic, and of which an impressive example is seen in the French Spoliation claims, now more than a century old.

Reed made an exhaustive speech on the subject, and one that so illuminated all the doubtful questions connected with it as to receive the approbation of the House. The facts with which he dealt were scattered through a score of large volumes, but he declared that the controlling facts were in reality few in number, and he promised that if the members would listen to him he would try to present them in a way that would aid their judgment. He declared that the duty devolved upon Congress to distribute the money directly and

that the subject was not one for a court. It should not be distributed to the insurance companies because it was clear that they had charged for war-risks which were kept distinct from the other hazards, and these charges had been so great that they had met every dollar paid out by the companies for losses, and had paid from "thirty-five to forty per cent dividends besides." The companies were asking Congress to pay the "amount of money in consideration of which they actually obtained thirty-five per cent dividends." He believed that position involved an absurdity. If the subject were referred to a court, it would either decide in favor of the insurers or it would not. If it should not decide in favor of the insurers, that would be in accordance with the decision that Congress had always made and would make again. But if it should decide in their favor, "then," Reed declared, "I do not want to give them the chance to do that. . . .We are the law-making power. . . . If we make provision for its distribution we must lay down just principles which shall guide the distribution." The man who had lost his ship and who received only a portion of the loss from the insurance companies should be paid the balance out of the Geneva fund, and the men who had paid high war premiums should receive their money back. It was that money which had increased the amount of the fund. They had not been able to recoup themselves from freights, "because they had been obliged to take freight in competition with British bottoms, which did not pay war premiums." The claim of the companies

which had made great dividends was not to be considered. "Paid once with splendid profits, why should they come again? Simply because incorporated man has the courage sublime enough to put the natural man to an open shame? Unincorporated man is satisfied to be paid once. How many payments would satisfy incorporated man human experience has not yet decided."

The insurance companies were able to muster strong support, and as the debate proceeded speeches were made against Reed's position. Reed replied to them in a brief speech in which he contended that the award was "in the nature of a fine imposed upon Great Britain for the injury she did our commerce. What shall we do with the money? Distribute it to the people engaged in commercial pursuits who were injured by that act of Great Britain, by her permitting Confederate cruisers to be fitted out in her dockyards and allowing them to be coaled and refitted in the ports of her colonies." Those opposed to the bill had asked that a court should decide the question according to the law of nations. "What!" Reed replied, "a distribution of money among our own citizens? . . . What has the law of nations to do with the Calcutta trade in Boston, or with the coastwise trade in California? It is a good mouth-filling phrase, but it does not mean business." One of the members in opposition had said that Congress did not have as large a jurisdiction as the Supreme Court. "Has it not?" asked Reed. "Then why does not the Supreme Court transact all the business of the

country? What is this Congress here for? To decide individual rights, sometimes by general laws, sometimes by particular laws."

The bill then passed by a vote of 133 to 67. It is a striking tribute to the justice of Reed's position, considering the ancient character of the controversy, that his bill should have been passed by the Senate without an amendment. In the latter body Senator Hoar, who had charge of it, said that some of the questions raised were "a good deal like questions in theology. . . . The practical common sense however of the House and Senate has brushed aside the technicalities."

The Democrat who had opposed Reed in the election, and had been defeated by so slight a margin, entered a contest for his seat. Although a liberal allowance is always made by the government for the legal expenses of both sides in a contest for a seat, Reed apparently acted as his own counsel. He filed a brief, a very short one, in his own behalf, covering scarcely three printed pages. He declared that he had been reluctant to present the brief in the case because it hardly seemed worthy of argument. The paper presented against him was, he said, "utterly vague. This is not the fault of the able and distinguished lawyer who prepared it. He found nothing sustained by proofs and was therefore unable to make any definite statement. But it makes it difficult for me. It is hard to reply to fog." The most definite allegation appeared to be that there had been intimidation of voters in favor of Reed. To this charge Reed replied in the brief,

"I can only say that my experience with the Democracy of my district does not lead me to regard them as cowards or sneaks. If I could scare them as easily as the contestant seems to think and by means as inadequate as he has proved, I have certainly been recreant in a plain duty. I ought to have scared more of them." The contest was decided in favor of Reed.

During the consideration of the bill for the extension of the charters of the national banks which were then about to expire, Reed was absent from the House on account of illness. He was paired evidently in favor of the bill, for his position on the measure could hardly be doubted. The views of one of his colleagues from Maine, who had been chosen as a Greenbacker, are of interest as reflecting the intensity of the greenback sentiment in Maine at that time, and very likely in the country. This colleague proposed an amendment limiting the extension of the charters to three years, and declared that the national banking system in this country was the most dangerous institution that ever afflicted its people. "I am willing to concede national banks three years, to allow them to go into some honest business, but I want them after that to be eliminated from the financial system of the country."

The House, having the sole constitutional power to originate revenue bills, passed and sent to the Senate during this Congress a bill repealing certain internal revenue taxes in order to do away with a portion of the very large surplus revenue. The Senate amended the bill by adding to it a revision of the tariff.

It was contended on the part of the House that this was an abuse of its constitutional prerogative, and the ancient controversy between the houses was fought over again. The Senate had taken the position, against the view of some of the greatest lawyers who had ever sat there, that the passage by the House of any sort of tax bill, however insignificant in character, conferred upon the Senate the right to range over the whole field of taxation and radically to revise the revenue system of the country, without regard to whether the revision was pertinent to the subjects in the House bill or not. The ancient contention of the House was that, when it sent a tax bill to the Senate, the right of the latter to amend was in fairness restricted to the taxes imposed by the bill, and that the broad claim of the Senate would reduce to insignificant proportions the prerogative of the House, which was the result of one of the great compromises in the Constitutional Convention. The purpose of that compromise was to give a substantial concession to the large states for the equal share which was conferred upon the small states in the great powers of the Senate, and to confer upon the popular body where the states were represented according to population, an important prerogative with respect to taxation bills.

When the House bill came back thus amended by the Senate, the Democrats inaugurated a vigorous filibuster against action, and the House was unable to make any progress under the rules. Reed, from the Committee on Rules, reported a special order the

effect of which would be to give the majority of the House control over the situation. The Democrats then filibustered against the adoption of the rule, using all the various motions that could be entertained, from a parliamentary standpoint. A long controversy ensued and a partisan debate, in which the proceeding was fiercely denounced by Cox, Blackburn, and other Democrats. Reed in reply admitted that if it were not for a great emergency he would not favor the rule, but the House was committed to the passage of revenue legislation. The Democrats were preventing the carrying out of this policy by systematic obstruction. As to the constitutional question he declared that in his judgment the bill as it was amended did not show sufficient deference to the principles which should govern under the Constitution. "But why," he asked, "was that question not raised? . . . Why was it that the gentleman from Kentucky contented himself with language upon the subject, instead of bringing in a resolution upon the constitutional point?" He declared that the question should be referred to a committee of conference to be appointed by the two Houses. At a later stage of the discussion Reed expressed even more strongly his opinion upon the constitutional question. He declared that the Senate had transcended its power in the amendment which it had made.

A conference was at last agreed to, but in a form which displeased the Senate and especially the Democratic members, none of whom would serve upon the conference committee. Mr. Harris, the Democratic

leader, said in reply to a question by the President of the Senate that he believed the Chair would be warranted in assuming that no Democrat would serve on the committee. The opposition in the Senate, however, was due not to its own infringement on the prerogative of the House, but to the circumstance that the House did not complacently assent to the infringement. The outcome of the controversy was that the conferees of both Houses agreed upon a bill which did in effect reduce customs duties, although a bill affecting internal revenue taxation only had passed the House. The Republicans had yielded upon the constitutional ground sufficiently to warrant the taunt of Mr. J. Randolph Tucker: "They swapped the Constitution for the high tariff." Reed voted in silence to accept the conference report, evidently contenting himself with the resolution passed by the House protesting against the infraction of its constitutional rights by the Senate. A brief reference to the matter in his diary shows that he was impressed with the brilliancy of the parliamentary tactics which, out of a situation which seemed well-nigh hopeless, secured the enactment of the law.

During this Congress Reed supported the civil-service-reform bill and he also delivered a speech, longer than he usually made, against "free ships" and in favor of developing the shipbuilding industry in the United States. His chief argument was based upon the desirability of being able to build our warships, and especially to make repairs in time of war and to

provide munitions of war. He made a report from his committee on certain land grants given by the government to the railroads. In some cases the report affirmed that the conditions of the grants had been complied with and in other cases recommended forfeiture. It was politically dangerous at that time not to report in favor of a forfeiture, regardless of what the law and facts were. When Reed made this report, he was engaged in his campaign for reëlection. A Texas colonel stumped his district and made charges against him on account of his action on some of the grants. The charges evidently made little impression. In that year, in Maine, the Congressmen were elected by the state at large, and Reed ran ahead of his ticket throughout the state. After the election he made a speech in the City Hall in Portland, and noticed for the first time what he called the "vile personal attack" that had been made upon him; and he added, amid great cheering, "I am proud to think I have never been called upon to answer it. You have answered it by your votes, more thoroughly and fully than I could have done."

On December 12, 1882, Reed supported the bill for a Congressional Library building. He traced the history of the collection, from the small number of books intended for the use of the two houses of Congress until it had become the largest collection in America. He declared that no man with any love for books could "visit the rooms of the Congressional Library without indignant feelings of sorrow and regret to see

the contemptuous treatment by a great nation of the rich treasures of literature and learning which are scattered around on the floors and in every passageway." This condition could not be met by the proposal that, as it was originally intended to be only a Congressional Library, one half of the books ought to be burned. "Which half," Reed asked, "the half which the gentleman from Maryland does not like or the half which any other gentleman in the House does not like? . . . In a great library meant for a great nation, nothing pertaining to a library is out of place." He referred to the effective use that Macaulay, in writing his history of England, had made of pamphlets which had been rejected as ephemeral rubbish by other historians. We were rapidly approaching the nations of the old world in numbers, we were in fact even topping them in wealth, "and we shall equal them in civilization as well." One of the brightest marks of civilization, "one of the surest guarantees of the spread of literature and of knowledge, is the preservation of those means whereby knowledge and wisdom come to men. Let us make a building worthy not only of ourselves but of the object for which we build it."

The plea for narrow economy prevailed and the bill failed. This was a fortunate circumstance, however, for he had the satisfaction of helping in a later Congress to make more ample provision than could then have been hoped for, and the splendid building which now holds the Library was the result.

On February 21, 1883, Reed suggested that the hall

of the House be divided into two parts, one part to be used for the desks and the other to be "reserved, in which members can be heard. But to put desks in the middle of this ten-acre lot in which we are now doing business would be the greatest mistake in the world." Reed was impressed with the great difficulty of doing business in such an enormous hall, far larger than that of any other legislative chamber in the world, and more than twice as large as the English House of Commons which had a much larger membership. He wished a hall of a proper size for doing business, so that a member, whether or not he had what Reed called a "magnificent voice," could be heard.

CHAPTER IX

ROUGH AND TUMBLE

THERE was much rough-and-tumble fighting in the House in those days, and very much of it fell to Reed on account of his readiness and also because of his place on the Rules Committee and his chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee. A great deal of it was on trifling questions of procedure or on unimportant measures, and is no longer of any consequence except perhaps in showing Reed's everyday manner in dealing with the commonplaces of business, and the offhand banter with which he enlivened the dull routine of the House. One day Mr. Springer of Illinois called upon Reed to prove a proposition that the latter had put forth.

REED : Now I cannot teach the gentleman from Illinois any wisdom; I cannot hope to do it.

SPRINGER : No, you cannot.

REED : No, I cannot. It is necessary, for the plant to grow, not only that there should be seeds sown, but also that there shall be soil in which to imbed them. . . . The great difficulty is, not that I cannot tell him what is the right way, if he would be instructed; but the difficulty is in making connection at the other end of the road. . . . Now I trust the House appreciates the hopelessness of the situation and will allow me to sit down.

Mr. Cox of New York referred to the drinking of liquor in Maine, where there was a prohibitory law

and said: "The Republican party drinks a good deal of whisky clandestinely that we do not know anything about." "When my friend from New York takes it," retorted Reed, "it does not remain clandestine very long."

Mr. Townshend of Illinois complained that he could not make a five-minute speech against the tariff "but they cry 'vote,' 'vote,' and seek to put me down." "It is because you make the same speech every time," said Reed. "It is not the speech we complain of so much as it is the monotony of the thing; we want a change." On one occasion Springer endeavored to secure unanimous consent to correct a statement he had previously made in a partisan speech. REED: "No correction needed, we did not think it was so when it was made." On another day Springer accused Reed of making light of his (Springer's) remarks. REED: "I will say to the gentleman that if I 'made light' of his remarks it is more than he ever made of them himself."

On January 3, 1883, in a discussion of Mississippi River improvements, Mr. Randall referred in a laudatory manner to what he and his party had been willing to do for the river. He was followed by Mr. Cox, to similar effect. Reed replied that he had heard Randall make the same speech with more or less enthusiasm six times, and had read it in two antecedent records. "I approve of that method. . . . The first time a man talks he has to attend to what he says; the eighth or ninth time he has an opportunity

to put in the gestures and to look after his personal interests." [*Laughter.*] Reed intimated that Randall had an eye on the Speakership, and was "enabled to put himself right with the Mississippi River gentlemen if they choose to believe his words in defiance of his deeds. . . . I am glad to see the gentleman from New York prance forward in his usual style." A member asked to whom Reed referred.

> I refer to the gentleman from New York, Mr. Cox, who last ornamented the situation. [*Laughter.*] It was a blessed comfort to see him step forward because we knew that another candidate had entered the ring, if I may use such an undignified expression. [*Laughter.*] This House and the country wait in solemn state to hear the next candidate for the Speakership present his views of life and duty with reference to the Mississippi.

Reed did not take Mr. Cox at his own valuation, for the latter had pretensions to being considered a wit. But he put a high estimate upon him in other respects. He subsequently wrote of him: —

> Mr. Cox was not an orator, hardly a leader, and perhaps not a wit; but in action he was a whole skirmish line, and has covered more movements of the Democratic party, and led it out of more parliamentary pitfalls than any of its orators and all its leaders put together.

The House, as has been seen, was very narrowly Republican, and there was every incentive for indulging in obstruction when a measure was brought forward that was especially obnoxious to the minority. Election contests, when it was proposed to unseat members of the minority, would usually arouse the

fiercest partisan passion and lead to the most determined obstruction. In those times upon such an occasion the war was sure to be fought over again and the House would become the scene of great disorder. An election contest from South Carolina precipitated a violent outbreak which lasted for several days, and as progress was impossible under the regular rules of the House, a special order was reported by the Committee on Rules, and Reed was put in charge of the measure. During the days that followed, Reed was therefore the leader of the House so far as it could be said to have any leader. They were days of somewhat more orderly proceeding but were charged with great excitement. Reed's argument on the rule consisted in quoting precedents from Democratic speakers and others when that party was in control of the House and responsible for its action, and in reply Randall and his Democratic colleagues cited the speeches made by Republican members when that party was in the minority and when it resorted to dilatory tactics to prevent action. The ancient practice of filibustering had at least very much simplified the method of proceeding. An argument had been thoroughly developed both for the minority and majority and was well seasoned by precedent. Each side had only to cite as authority the arguments put forward by the other side in some previous Congress and to accuse it of inconsistency. Upon that subject both sides were equally inconsistent, and Reed with the others was accused of inconsistency and was doubtless guilty of it.

Upon the great public questions Reed's course was a remarkably consistent one, but he was not much troubled by accusations of inconsistency. This is the way he dealt with the subject in a later Congress: —

> I do not promise the members of this House whenever they listen to me to give them wisdom of adamant. I do not promise them I shall not change my opinion when I see good reason for doing it. I only promise that I will give them honestly what my opinion is at the time. They must take their chances of its being for eternity. [*Laughter and applause.*]

The House of Representatives of the Forty-seventh Congress was destined to be the only Republican House chosen between 1872 and 1888. The factional strife in the Republican party in the state of New York, the overturn in that party caused by the succession of Mr. Arthur to the presidency, and the antecedent squabble over the New York collectorship, were probably the causes chiefly responsible for the reaction which showed itself in the election of 1882. The division of the party into "Stalwarts" and "Half-breeds" was more clearly marked in that state than any other, and led to the defeat of Mr. Folger for governor by a phenomenal majority which had much to do with making Mr. Cleveland, who was elected, the candidate of his party for the presidency.

Reed, as has been seen, was chosen a representative at large from Maine, leading the other candidates of his party on the ticket. The Speaker of the preceding House, Keifer, was conceded the renomination by the

Republicans. Carlisle displaced Randall as the Democratic leader, on account of the protectionist principles of the latter, and was nominated for the Speakership by the Democrats and elected.

Thus Randall retired from the leadership of his party in the House. He had led it when in the minority. During three Congresses he had been Speaker. In the latter position he had rendered the country a signal service, and had possibly saved it from anarchy and civil war. When he was Speaker, in 1877, the great majority of his party in the House and in the country believed that Tilden had been elected to the presidency. Randall discarded the practice he himself had so often followed and refused to entertain dilatory motions, to the end that the count of the presidential vote might be consummated before the fourth of March, the day on which the new term was to begin. If Grant's term had come to its constitutional end and his successor had not been determined upon, chaos itself would have intervened. The extent of the damage would have been incalculable with a weak or a small man in the Speaker's chair, and Randall reached a sublime height on that day when he put before himself the good of the country and, partisan as he usually was, and in defiance of many of his own party and of the precedents which he himself had helped to establish, he cleared the way for the completion of the count. Reed said of him, "Perhaps there may have been better parliamentarians, men of broader intellect and more learning, but there have been few

men with a will more like iron or a courage more unfaltering." [1]

Keifer became the titular leader of the minority in the House, through his nomination for Speaker; but without any disparagement of that gentleman, Reed had shown himself the most conspicuous Republican member and was therefore called upon to do very much of the work of the fighting leader.

This Congress contributed little legislation of much importance. The division of the control of the departments of government between the two parties prevented legislation of a partisan character. And indeed, while there was very much of partisanship between 1873 and 1889, very little of it found its place upon the statute books, because of the circumstance that no party had control of both the presidency and Congress during that time except for a period of two years. Although there was much political skirmishing, there was very little important legislation beyond that of the routine sort in the Congress which was chosen in 1882.

The proceedings of this Congress do not make interesting reading, and if they were not occasionally relieved by the flashes of Reed's wit, they would be intensely dull. He made a serious attack on the rules of the House, in a speech which foreshadowed the position he was to take, when he became Speaker, in favor of a system of rules under which the House could do business. On February 7, 1884, he called attention to the necessity for amendment of the rules, pointing

[1] *Saturday Evening Post*, December 9, 1899.

out that the House under its procedure could transact only eight per cent of its business, and that the provisions of the rules must hinge upon that important fact. Speaking on the same line February 18, with regard to a proposition to take up the International Copyright bill under a special order, Reed said sarcastically: "Our rules were intended to kill bills; and why should they not be left to operate as intended?" The House refused to take up this bill for consideration, a majority having voted for it but not the two thirds necessary for the suspension of the rules. Reed was one of those who voted for its consideration. Under the later system, which was adopted during Reed's Speakership, an important measure like this would have received consideration.

Filibustering continued upon every occasion which the minority deemed a proper one, and although the House was Democratic by sixty majority, that party was very often unable to command a quorum. The old comedy of bringing members in under arrest was repeatedly performed. Finally, when a Republican member was brought in, a motion was made to impose a small fine upon him and it was insisted upon by the Democratic members. Reed ridiculed the proposition out of the House. He asked the Democrats if they were willing to go to the country presenting the spectacle of a Democratic House two hundred strong not able to get within sixty of its membership present,

> and yet punishing a gentleman on this side of the House because he was doing what sixty of your own members have

done. . . . We offered you complete control of the House and you did not dare to take it. . . . It is because you did not dare to trust yourselves. You knew yourselves better than we did. Here you have been struggling all night long, two hundred strong, to pass a bill which your gentle hearts are set upon, to pay men for Creek wars and disturbances of 1835 or some other unknown periods, and it has come down to this, that you solidify at last upon a fine of five dollars against the member from Pennsylvania, and the majestic heart of the Democratic party is just now stirred in pursuit of the Honorable S. S. Cox and another of your leaders who seem somehow or another to have escaped. [*Renewed laughter.*] . . . The best thing on earth you can do is to go quietly away and try to make the country think that this thing has never occurred. Now, is not what I have said directly to the point? I submit to the candid judgments of the men I see before me, calmed and soothed by what I have said. [*Laughter.*]

Reed continued his opposition to the policy of not providing for the Navy. At the end of the Civil War, on account of the improvements in naval architecture and especially in the direction of building armored vessels, our Navy was powerful compared with foreign navies; but it was permitted to remain as it was at that time. In the course of the next fifteen years progress in naval construction abroad had made our Navy practically obsolete. Reed was strongly in favor of having a modern navy, although he did not favor extravagant appropriations. When the Naval bill, upon which he had previously spoken, was returned from the Senate with amendments in favor of strengthening the Navy, Reed attempted to have Randall, who was in charge of the bill, declare what his position was on the Senate propositions. Randall refused to

make it known. Reed then made a strong speech showing the necessity of dealing with the situation and the failure of Randall to do it. He insisted that ordinary parliamentary courtesy, "which sometimes goes beyond the absolute necessities of the case," would indicate that Randall should condescend to make an explanation to the House at large just as if he did not know that

he had at his back gentlemen who cared nothing about what was in the Senate amendments either one way or another. Think of a great nation without a navy treated to the two reasons now given why a navy should not be built. First, the department would be liable under the Senate amendment to build ships; and second, another bill was pending which could not possibly be passed and therefore this amendment should not pass. . . . Here you are with the responsibilities of the country upon you. The gentleman from Pennsylvania takes a gentle refuge in the past — that home of democracy — the place where they live and from which they never go. He says, "We are not responsible for the paralysis of the Navy; that belongs to the past." To-day the gentleman from Pennsylvania is chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. If he is not responsible for the present, who is? . . . Who is responsible for the paralysis of the present? Will he undertake to deny his responsibility for a naval appropriation bill which passed this House with no appropriation for ordnance? . . . Why, sir, what an attempt! Does the Democratic party intend to go before the country and simply disclaim responsibility as to the past, hoping thereby to shirk its responsibility as to the present? . . . The gentleman from Pennsylvania says we will never have any war. . . . The history of mankind is to the contrary, and it shows that no wise nation with surplus revenue ever before presented the defenseless spectacle which this country presents.

In a later speech he congratulated the Democratic

party upon the advance it had made regarding the Navy. A gentleman from Tennessee had declared that the proper Navy for the United States was "a couple of logs with an American flag fastened to them; and the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Eaton, has to-day advanced as far as a canoe." [*Laughter.*]

During the same session Reed had an amusing colloquy with Cox. He quoted from a speech on the Naval bill made by the latter, in which he cited an opinion of the "Admiral of the American Navy" against the construction of some steel cruisers. Reed attempted to unravel the mystery and ascertain who the "Admiral of the Navy" was, and he concluded that Cox had confused himself with that official and had cited an opinion of his own. Reed then proceeded: —

> Now I remember but one historical parallel to this. George IV, an accomplished gentleman, — and there the parallel is perfect with my friend from New York, — a man who had been busy about great affairs, — and the parallel continues, — had become so interested in those great affairs that he actually labored under the hallucination that he was present at the battle of Waterloo, and he insisted upon the Duke of Wellington endorsing his statement. Now the gentleman from New York [Mr. Cox] has been at the head of the Committee on Naval Affairs . . . he has evidently so devoted his mind to the subject of the Navy, has evidently become so fired with enthusiasm upon the subject, has so absorbed himself in it that he has forgotten his own personality, — a great matter, — and for the moment has imagined himself to be the Lord High Admiral of the American Navy.

Reed's speech had an irritating effect and Cox re-

joined that "if ignorance and impudence would make a statesman the gentleman from Maine would be a Bismarck," and there was a good deal more to the same effect. Reed replied that Cox had avoided the facts. He insisted that he had proved that the "Admiral of the Navy" did not say what Cox had alleged, but that the statement was made by Cox himself, "and he retorts with gross personal allusions. . . . He quotes himself, causing his statement to be promulgated over this country as a statement of the 'Admiral of the Navy.'"

Cox made the mistake of taking Reed's banter seriously. He denied Reed's statement and asked leave to present in the "Record" an explanation, which he did at considerable length, but it seemed strictly to corroborate the assertion made by Reed. Cox embodied in his statement the explanation, "On the hasty glance I cast on it, I did not observe that the quotation marks did not refer to Admiral Porter."

On December 17, 1884, the race question was brought under discussion by an amendment proposed with more frankness than discretion, by Mr. Crisp of Georgia, to a bill establishing an Interstate Commerce Commission. The amendment provided that a certain section of the bill should not be so construed "as to prevent any railroad company from providing separate accommodations for white and colored persons." The color issue was not at that time a popular one to advance in national legislation, and Mr. Breckinridge of Arkansas aimed to accomplish the same end by

proposing a substitute, which was not so brutally frank. The substitute omitted all reference to color and provided that the act should not be construed so as to deny to railroads "the right to classify passengers as they may deem best for the public comfort and safety." This gave Reed an opportunity to make a sarcastic speech which proved absolutely destructive of the proposition. He declared that he rejoiced to see the question lifted by the suggestion of Breckinridge from a mere question of politics or of color.

> This at once ceases to be a question of politics or color and has now become a question of assortment; and now this House, which is determined to pursue these robber barons, has before it the plain question whether it will not merely leave to them the privilege of assorting us, but whether it will absolutely confer upon them the privilege of assortment by the direct enactment on the part of Congress.
>
> Now I appeal to this House, engaged as it is in the pursuit of wicked monopolies, if it intends to confer upon them a privilege of assortment without rights by law. Why surely we must have some treasury regulation as to the method of assortment. Are we to be assorted on the ground of size? Am I to be put into one car because of my size and the gentleman from Arkansas into another car because of his? Is this to be done on account of our unfortunate difference of measurement, or are we to be sorted on the mustache ground? . . .
>
> If not any of these, what basis of assortment are we to have? For my part I object to having these robber barons overlook and assort us on any whimsical basis they may undertake to set up.

He made a trenchant attack on the Post-Office appropriation bill. Townshend of Illinois, who had the bill in charge, lost his temper completely under the

criticism. He declared that "every clown" on the other side had ridiculed the bill, and he directly attacked Reed whose denunciation of it had made him wince. He accused the latter of defending every extravagant appropriation that was proposed and of defending peculators and railroad corporations. This was far outside the courtesies of debate, and a member called him to order, demanding that the words be taken down. Reed interposed to say that that would give them too much significance, but he insisted that Townshend should specify instances. Townshend apparently could not, or did not, do this, but adhered to generalities in his charge against Reed. When he resumed his seat, the latter took the floor. He said simply that there were two sets of people for whose opinion he cared a great deal: his constituency which knew him, and the House which knew Townshend. "It is hardly necessary to say that I shall stand vindicated before both." He then broke into a superb sentence which showed the real dignity of his attitude and his freedom from demagogy. Referring to the taunt about the corporations, he declared: —

> While I stand here a member of this House, there is no man on the face of the earth so poor nor any corporation so rich that I will prostitute myself to injustice for the sake of that temporary advantage which comes of maintaining a false position because some dishonest men are clamoring against me.

On February 15, 1884, Reed made an important speech in Philadelphia. Speaking of the agitation of the tariff, he said: —

I know we should all be glad if we could step aside and say, "Now let us have a peaceful day of rest. Politics are over and the millennium is begun." But we live in a world of sin and sorrow. Otherwise there would not be any Democratic party. I take it that I speak to an audience who believe in protection to American industry. Not to those who believe in fostering a few petty industries to the exclusion of others, but who believe in that broad principle and system which gives to American labor the entire markets of America.

He declared that it was necessary to keep up the fight.

No sooner is a monument erected than the gnawing tooth of time sets itself upon it. The forces of evil are as continuous and determined as the forces of right, and I am sorry to say that right is only right by a very small majority that has got to be kept up every day. This world is one where we can not always have our own way. There have been times when I have not been able to have mine. Therefore a good many men that I would have liked to punish are still flourishing upon the earth. Life is a perpetual source of disappointment. You can never do what you would like to do. You have always to do the best thing you can do.

The leading journals credited him with being the most brilliant man upon his side of the House. "His speeches," one correspondent declared, "always bristle with points. His points of order are invariably well taken because he is a master of parliamentary law."

He had at last fairly won his way to the real leadership of his party in the House, a leadership which he retained without a rival so long as he remained a member.

CHAPTER X

NOMINATION FOR SPEAKER

The presidential election of 1884 was most bitterly contested. The legitimate political issues furnished sufficient material for excitement, but there was a degree of personal bitterness toward the candidates which was, at the time, unexampled, and which happily has not since been witnessed. The rhetorical trick of understatement had not come into vogue, and epithets of the most vituperative character were freely used.[1] The most important factor in the result in New York, which was the decisive state, was the "Stalwart" and "Half-breed" division. The struggle over the patronage during Garfield's brief incumbency had been followed by the resignation of Conkling and Platt, and the party was rent asunder in that state. Blaine, because of his relations to the Garfield administration and the personal hostility between him and Conkling, was the last man upon whom the two factions could be expected to unite. The defection in Conkling's own county was much more than sufficient to explain Blaine's defeat, and the influence of the former throughout the state, in which he had long been the most conspicuous figure in his party, doubtless

[1] For an example see Mr. George Fred Williams's speech on Blaine at a Mugwump rally in Tremont Temple, Boston.

counted for many thousand votes. New York was an extremely doubtful state at the best. That a change of a few hundred votes out of a million and a half should have been sufficient to give Blaine the state seems incredible. But Cleveland, who was at the time Governor of the state and its favorite son, carried it by only eleven hundred plurality. The Mugwump contingent in that state apparently proved less formidable in numbers than in the character of its members and possibly also in their animosity. If that movement had never existed, the other known elements of disturbance would have been sufficient easily to account for the result in New York.

Reed had a far less difficult campaign in 1884 than it had ever been his fortune to have. Blaine was very strong in his own state, and the other candidates of his party felt the influence of his popularity. Reed was elected by a substantial majority, which, indeed, he received at every subsequent election. He cordially supported Blaine, and declared that at no time in the history of the country had there ever been so free and untrammeled a representation of the people as in the convention which nominated him. The influence of the political dictators, by which Reed probably meant what in modern parlance is called the political boss, was not seen in its action.

There was another "charge" against Reed which appeared in this campaign. He was accused of "neglecting the interests of his district." The following quotation from a letter from one of the most

prominent Democrats in Congress is pertinent on this point.

September 9, 1884.

My dear Reed: —

I returned home yesterday, regretting to find that the work of political defamation proceeds now, as of old. I regret also that I did not arrive in time to relieve you from what I believe to be the unjust charge of having neglected the interests of your district. Certainly I have never known a representative more diligent in looking out for what he believes to be the interests of his constituents, than you have always been. . . .

I am glad that you have been reëlected. . . . I have always admired your capacity and fearlessness; and if my political adversaries are to be found in the House at all, I know of no one whose presence is more acceptable than yours. You always give and take the blows which are incident to free political life with courage and calmness. But you never allow political differences to interfere with your personal friendships; hence I am proud to class you among my friends, and trust that you will permit me to subscribe myself now, as heretofore,

Very truly your friend,

Abram S. Hewitt.

On July 30, 1885, Reed delivered a notable address at Colby University, Waterville, Maine. In it he repudiated the notion that kings and leaders, and not the people, made history even in despotic times. The following passages will serve to show its argument and its quality.

To history of that kind democracy was but of yesterday, and in that history the people took no part except as they were forced by the brave men or cajoled by the knaves. To such history, that interesting figure, that much-married, much-widowed and altogether bereaved man, Henry VIII,

was the founder of our holy religion, Elizabeth its preserver and savior, Napoleon the conqueror of Europe, and Alexander of the world. But democracy is not of yesterday. It has equal date with the race of man. There has never been a moment since time began in which every human being did not count for what he was worth in all that was achieved by his nation and his race. . . .

Out of the great mass of each nation has come all national progress. It is not the leaders and foremost men who make a nation; it is the nation which makes the leaders. The old story which adorned the Greek Reader of my day, or some equally venerated volume, about the army of stags with a lion for a leader and the army of lions with a stag for a leader, was but a silly old story after all; for in the first case the lion would have leaped forward and the stags would have run away, which would have been bad, even for the lion; and in the other case the lions would have made a light breakfast off the stag, and then acted the way lions act. . . .

If human progress had been more a matter of leadership, we should be in Utopia to-day. . . .

The pathway of time is strewn with the failure of leaders. . . .

Queen Victoria has three hundred millions of subjects; Elizabeth had but five. Where is the unbroken line of great leaders under which this marvelous growth has flourished? You will search for them in vain. You cannot find them among the kings. From Elizabeth to Victoria only one name shines out; and how much the name of William of Orange owes to the genius of Macaulay, our generation, yet under the spell of that brilliant writer, will never know. You will not find the great leaders among the chief advisers of the Crown. We do not start at the recognition of a hero in Sir Robert Walpole, bribe in hand, or in the Pelhams, or in the Earl of Bute, or in George Grenville, or in the respectable Marquis of Rockingham, or even in the great William Pitt, who died heartbroken because all his plans seemed to fail. All that made him great was his steadfast representation of the indomitable spirit of the British people for whom there was no failure. But there stands out from the rest the great

figure of Cromwell! Was he not a great man and a great leader? Most assuredly I am not saying that there are not great men and great leaders. That would be senseless. But it is far more senseless to say with Carlyle that without Cromwell the Puritan Revolt would never have been an epoch in the world's history. The Puritan Revolt was an uprising of a whole nation. It is curious to see how full of unconscious proofs to the contrary is Carlyle's book, written to show that Cromwell alone made that epoch in history. Everywhere you can see the rising tide long before Cromwell was surged to the top of the wave. . . .

"Miscellaneous Persons and Shopmen as we should now call them," says Carlyle, with his emphasis of capital letters, "rolled about all day bellowing to every lord and judge, 'Justice on Strafford.'" Their clamor sealed his doom. In the real history of the world the "Miscellaneous Person and Shopman" have played many a great part of which some one great man has had the glory. If great men, able men, rule the world, why was not Wentworth successful? He was the one supremely able man the King had. On his side were constable and king, nobility and army. Why fell his head into the basket? In truth, in those old fierce days when life was the stake of politics, if the great man, however "supremely able," met a great popular wave, he had to dive under or be drowned. . . .

The men who are on the top of these great waves get mistaken in the popular mind for the wave itself. . . .

Every criticism against Abraham Lincoln is dying out. Every fault of his life is dropping away, is passing out of sight. The century after his death will find him transfigured in the hearts of all mankind. . . . But to say that without him we could not have worked out the problem would be to do, not justice to him, but injustice to all others. Not to one great man, but to the many belongs our victory. Not at Springfield, but on the broad plain of Arlington Heights, stands the monument of our shining achievement, not towering high to heaven, but spreading lowly over many an acre rich with the memory of the buried dead; and not there alone, nor on the quiet hillside where every year the

living assemble to do honor to the dead, but everywhere in hamlet and in city, in the field and in the mart — wherever during the great struggle there was a steadfast and patriotic soul.

But it is easy to see in lands and times like our own how the people govern, for all our institutions are moulded to make visible their wishes. The people, however, had their way even in despotic times. Not so swiftly as now, but as surely. . . . For three quarters of a century the French nobility and clergy, entrenched behind existing institutions, behind the use and wont of mankind, fighting against an ignorant and impoverished people, thought they were successfully keeping down the rising flow of knowledge and liberty. But when the flood burst, not a vestige of old nobility, of Church or State, encumbered the earth. The ruin was as wide as the dam had been stout. A new Church and State uprose in time, but it was the Church and State of a freer, a more civilized, a loftier people. And so in every country, whether liberty broadens down, as in England, from precedent to precedent, or as in France, from revolution to revolution, the steady progress of civilization comes from the people and by the people — is forever of them. You cannot keep the people out of government and progress. If their intelligence does not rule, their ignorance will. . . .

There are a thousand ways in which knowledge and wisdom, culture and scholarship, and even brute force and wealth and cunning, get themselves counted. Heads are counted and brains also. Ignorance gets counted as well as intelligence, and is quite apt to poll the larger vote.

There is, and always has been, one tremendous ruler of the human race — a ruler so great that no other despotism has been possible, and that ruler is that combination of the opinions of all, that leveling up of universal sense which is called Public Sentiment. That is the ever-present regulator and police of humanity. . . .

But it behooves a man to take heed before he begins to run counter to it, whether he longs to proclaim a great principle which will free a race, or merely wants to wear his hair long down his back. . . . The race must go on together, and

as a whole. . . . Let a man proclaim a new principle in science or make an invention which supersedes the existing one, and he must fight. Public sentiment will surely be on the other side. It may try to kill him or it may only shrug its shoulders. The abolitionists in Old England and in New England know what this means, and so did John Wesley and the early Methodists, and almost all great inventors. The statue of Jacquard, whose invention added a thousandfold to the comfort and culture of the world, stands to-day on the very spot where his loom was burned under the orders of the council of the wise men of the trade of Lyons. In earlier ages we used to burn the man too.

The discovery of the solar system by Copernicus was a marvel of wisdom. What a mighty comprehensive mind must have filled that frail body! But there is one circumstance which shows that he had the wisdom of this world as well as of all others. He did not publish his book until he was on his death-bed. He knew how dangerous it is to be right when the rest of the world is wrong. . . . The rising sunbeams may strike into beauty the hilltops first, but their glancing rays are barren and unfructifying until they pour vertical into the valleys. Wisdom to be of any use must be within easy reach of the world.

The reason why the race of man moves slowly is because it must move all together. . . . It is not the knowledge of the great men, the skill of the great orators, the philosophy of the great sages that make civilization. There are no orators to-day as persuasive as Cicero, no philosophers or wise men greater than Aristotle or Plato. Yet civilization was not of their day, but of ours. The sunlight of knowledge for us has got beyond the hilltops. The valleys of to-day are not as beautiful as were the hills of yore, but they teem with life and health and verdure. . . .

Our progress is slow because we have to grope in the dark. We all live on hope. . . . What if the progress be slow? The race has all time before it. Each problem gets grappled with as it comes up.

Look at the battle between capital and labor. Each must have the other, and yet the struggle seems perpetual. You

invent machines and get rid of three fourths of your labor, and lo! the insatiable human race demands more, and more, and more of the product of your machine, and your labor must come back. If labor should destroy capital, it would destroy itself. If capital cheats labor, it cheats itself; . . . Why, then, is it that there is not a settlement once for all? Simply because men do not know what the fair share is. It will not do to give capital too little, otherwise men will neither accumulate nor risk capital. It will not do to give labor too little, or men will not work. . . . Capital hates to lose its interest, and men hate to starve. Then again, every business depends on its neighbor, and all depend on that inevitable fluctuation between good times and bad times which no human wisdom will probably ever be able to avert. It is evidently a problem which takes in the whole world, and can only be settled on the principles of democracy. . . . It will get settled by the intelligence which all acquire in the fight. The locations of a great many rocks are found by running against them. . . .

This history of the progress of all by all and through all lifts us to the highest Pisgah of hope and certainty. In its light the promised land of the future stands richer than the Canaan of the wearied Hebrews, richer than the fruitage of the vine the spies brought back, richer than the flowing of milk and honey; for we can see by the light which the future in all ages has thrown back upon the great souls of the past a world where the selfishness of each has been enlightened into selfishness for all; where war and famine and pestilence shall never come; where under the guardianship of eternal justice learned through long ages of struggle, and mistake, and become of the warp and woof of the world, each human being shall do all the work there is for him to do, and shall reap, without tribute to any other, the last results of his toil.

Apparently in December, 1886, Reed addressed the New England Society of New York on Forefathers' Day, and responded for the Congress of the United

States. His speech was a humorous one. He declared that he knew a great deal about the House, but that much of what he knew was strictly confidential. He said that Congress was composed of two Houses, "a large one and a little one. I belong to the large one." He referred to the hall of the House as the most absurd place in which men ever took common counsel over their affairs "since our ancestors transacted business on horseback in a ten-acre lot."

Reed was nominated by his party in 1886, and in each subsequent campaign, by acclamation. In his speech accepting the nomination in 1886, he denounced the Democratic administration for its attitude on civil-service reform. He declared that it was mortgaged, that the first mortgage was to the Mugwumps, and was ostensibly in favor of civil-service reform, but it amounted to this, that when the wrong kind of Democrat wanted office, reform kept him out, but when another came, with friends at court, he was nominated.

> Out of fifty-four appointments Commissioner Black got fifty-two Democrats. All others two. Fifty-two out of a possible fifty-four! Why, the prize target at Creedmore can show no such shooting! Nevertheless those two Democrats, Randall and Holman, proposed to amend the law and take in the other two. The two lost sheep!

He declared that before Cleveland's term was out there would not be a Republican in office, and the places would be filled, "not by you, my Democratic brother who rushed to Washington early, in the full

flush of exuberant hope, but by some Democratic brother who has not defiled himself by work and who has graduated from high school."

It was very common in those days for people to ride over the railroads on free passes and to call on their political friends to secure what were called "favors" from the roads. In reply to a request of that sort to Reed made by some one evidently very friendly to him Reed wrote as follows: —

> . . . I should have another objection to writing them or referring your request to them. It has so happened that I took their view of a law question before a committee of which I was chairman, last Congress. I presume that in the course of public duty I shall feel myself called on to take the same view in another attack upon their rights this Congress. I should not desire therefore to have anything in the nature of a favor from them. It might be misinterpreted by them and certainly would be by others. I need not say to you, who have so much experience in public affairs, that I do not expect, by acting thus strictly, to escape public slander. I only expect not to deserve it.

Reed's prominence in the House again made him a conspicuous candidate for the nomination by his party for the Speakership when the Forty-ninth Congress assembled at its December session in 1885. One of the leading newspapers, commenting on the rivalry between Reed, Hiscock, and Keifer, had said that the three strove for the recognition of their party until finally Reed gained the ascendancy through his aptness in debate. Keifer, however, had not been re-elected, and the contest was continued between Reed and Hiscock. Reed received support from many parts

of the country. Hiscock began with the support of his own state, with its very large delegation, and the chances appeared to favor him during the preliminary contest. It was believed that the outcome would prove extremely close. But Reed received in the caucus of the Republicans 63 votes against 42 for Hiscock. His large majority was unexpected.

The speech nominating Reed was made by McKinley of Ohio, according to the programme which Reed's supporters had previously arranged. Hiscock was named by Mr. William Walter Phelps of New Jersey, somewhat to the surprise of his supporters, because it had been arranged that he should be nominated by one of his colleagues from New York. The New York "Times" declared that this nominating speech astonished the friends of Hiscock. His nomination was, in brief, urged upon the ground that it would put him in line for election to the Speakership in the subsequent Congress, which Mr. Phelps predicted would be Republican in the House of Representatives. This had the effect of arousing the caution of every man present in the caucus who had aspirations of his own concerning the next Congress. John D. Long, former Governor of Massachusetts, was much in favor with the Southern members, but in the absence of any definite candidacy on his part they finally voted for Reed.

Reed's characteristics as a debater doubtless both contributed to his success and lost him votes. He was nothing of a compromiser. As a journalist of that day said of him, "He never makes concessions but wins

or loses on the knockout principle." He was at that time more direct and hard-hitting than he subsequently came to be. The fighting in the House of that day was more of the short-sword variety. Although Reed was as successful at that style of warfare as any man with whom he came in contact, he speedily outgrew it. The majority of his party selected him because he had proved himself to be its most masterful debater, absolutely fearless, and a Republican without qualification.

The nomination as its candidate for Speaker made Reed titular leader of his party in the House, and from that time until he retired from Congress nearly fifteen years later he was the candidate of his party for that position whether it was in a minority or a majority. He received in the House 138 votes against 178 for Mr. Carlisle. In the appointment of committees his name for the first time during his service appeared in the membership of Ways and Means.

Reed's election as the leader of his party in the House was well received throughout the country, and some of the newspaper writers proceeded to nominate him for the presidency. Long and Hiscock were mentioned for the same office by one of the correspondents.

Reed, in an interview, gave a humorous account of how he had eliminated his two rivals, and put forth a platform which stands to-day as a very good satire on the platform of the candidate who strives to be all things to all men. As soon as they saw the announcement that they were candidates, Reed said:—

Long and I assembled ourselves together, held a caucus, and agreed that the announcement so far as we are concerned was both timely and judicious, but we decided by a unanimous vote that Hiscock was not available, for reasons that must suggest themselves to every thoughtful and patriotic man. This action having narrowed the contest down to Long and myself, I suggested, with the kindest and most disinterested motive, that for the sake of harmony he ought to withdraw. He demurred to the proposition, and did not appear to take much interest in it, until I offered to make it an object to him and volunteered to pay him five dollars in lawful money if he would agree to retire in my favor and make a speech nominating me in the presidential convention. He replied that he was not a five-dollar man; whereupon I raised him to eight. If there is anything I despise it is avarice. I'm not a man to let a few dollars stand in the way of harmony, so when he refused my second proposition, I asked him how much he would take. He replied that he would not withdraw from the canvass, and make the speech for less than fifteen dollars, and was willing to let me write it or submit it for my approval. This was pretty steep as Long has n't the slightest chance of getting the nomination and is n't much of a speaker, but I came to his terms and offered to pay five dollars down, and the balance the day after I received the nomination. . . .

I'm running for the presidency upon a broad and comprehensive platform, and if I don't get the nomination it won't be because I'm not willing to give satisfaction to people of all colors, races, religions and political views. I believe in giving every man equal rights and a fair show. I believe that every man, woman and child should receive a pension who is entitled to it; that every just claim upon the Government should be promptly and fully paid with interest to date; that sectional strife should be smothered in fraternal love, and that the dead issues of the war should be decently buried at government expense. I am in favor of applying the principles of civil service reform to all the offices of the government, so as to give entire satisfaction to those who are in as well as those who are out; and that all legislation

intended to promote the prosperity of the country should be promptly enacted by Congress. On the labor question . . . I urge upon Congress the passage of a bill that will forever settle and set at rest all controversies between the employer and the employed. I believe that the surplus in the Treasury should remain unimpaired so far as is consistent with the financial welfare of the country, and that Congress should take such action in reference to the finances as will bring the greatest good to the greatest number; and I further desire to say [that] if I have omitted to declare my position on any interest representing a considerable number of votes, it shall be my earnest endeavor to amend or enlarge my platform accordingly. The motto on my escutcheon is, "I strive to please," and my aim is to merit the approbation and secure the support of Republicans, Democrats and Mugwumps. I desire to be considered a purely non-partisan candidate, and would prefer that my nomination and election should be unanimous.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIAL LIFE — DIVERSIONS

In the early part of Reed's service in Washington he lived with his family in a boarding-house on Twelfth Street, in which apparently General Logan and Mrs. Logan also lived and where the Logans and Reeds became very warm friends. He afterwards took up his residence at the Hamilton Hotel, which was much in vogue with the New England members. Among the other guests at the Hamilton were his colleagues of the Maine delegation in the House, Senator Frye from the same state, and Governor Long, a member from Massachusetts. Long and his family sat at the same table with Reed and his wife and daughter, an arrangement that continued for several years. With a scholar and wit like Long as his constant companion, it may well be doubted whether such lively conversation could have been found at any other table in Washington. They by no means confined their attention to themselves but they conspired together and carried consternation to the neighboring tables. At a near-by table sat Governor Dingley of Maine and a member from California. Dingley was a strict total abstainer. The California member used patriotically to drink a bottle of California wine every night with his dinner. The perpetual joke with Reed and Long, put forth with a great

variety of attack, was pretending to believe for three or four years that the bottle of wine was at Dingley's place instead of at the California member's. For a time this annoyed Dingley very much, and he attempted to explain; but explanations were of no avail against such a combination as Reed and Long and at last he resigned himself to the inevitable joke. At another time when Dingley's abstemious habits were referred to, Reed said: "If you want the Governor to take it just freeze it, the law is against taking it as a beverage."

After Reed became Speaker he removed to the Shoreham Hotel, where he resided during the remaining period of his service.

He delighted in the society of younger men, prominent among whom were Robert G. Cousins, a brilliant member from Iowa, and a jolly coterie of members from New York, of whom James S. Sherman, afterwards Vice-President, was the leader. Reed was much in the company of these New Yorkers and before they separated, partly as a result of adverse elections, they presented him with a handsome loving-cup. He was much in demand on social occasions and he gave up to them what time he could spare from his work.

He was not greatly addicted to cards although he occasionally played; and on going out for an evening's game he sometimes delighted to affect a ruse to explain his absence. On leaving home one evening he said to Mrs. Reed: "I am going to call on the Italian Ambas-

J. G. Carmodo

sador, Giuseppe Canoni." A few evenings later he repeated the same thing to Mrs. Reed. "But," she replied, "I thought the Italian Ambassador's name was Count ——." "No," said Reed, "it is Giuseppe Canoni, vulgarly known as Joe Cannon."

There is a club in Portland known as the Cumberland Club which has its home in an ample and attractive old house. It bears upon its rolls the names of many of the foremost men of Portland and other places in Maine. Reed was one of its original members. Many of them were boys with him when they belonged to the "warlike tribes" on Munjoy Hill, or were included in the other hostile bands of that early time. He said that it was "a peaceful little club in a small city, and all its members know each other and call each other by their first names. This is no more than natural for they were most of them schoolboys together. . . . Nobody maintained any dignity for everybody knew everybody's weak points, and there was never a raw spot unvisited. If a man had a fad it was unmercifully exposed to the air, and if he was n't cured he suffered." There was probably no other place where he was more exuberant or more thoroughly enjoyed himself than at the club, surrounded by those who, like himself well along in years, were kept young with him by the common memories of their youth. When in Portland he passed much time there and many are the amusing anecdotes that are told about him.

He used sometimes to write a short paper to be read to the members. One of them was upon the club it-

self, from which quotation has been made. Another, found among his manuscripts, and probably prepared for the club, was about "Our Cat" Anthony, the style of which may be inferred from the following paragraphs: —

Anthony is the name of our cat. He acquired this name by accident. He was originally called Cleopatra, but it was soon discovered that this name was inappropriate. It was therefore changed to Anthony because that seemed to conserve all the associations possible to be saved. Anthony is not a cat of rare race; just a common kind of a cat, but with individual distinctions due to himself and not to his ancestors. He has tiger markings and a tail which as it moves in procession down our street is of stately grandeur. Anthony is brave; sometimes offensively so. But he has also discretion. There is a big yellow cat in the neighborhood. Whenever that big yellow cat comes into view, Anthony does not stand upon the order of his going. He goes at once. He climbs a tree and looks down from an upper branch as who should say, "This street is yours, my friend; take both sidewalks. A little place like this is good enough for me." There is another cat in the neighborhood, John Small's cat, who looks exactly like Anthony. His markings are the same, his size and age are the same. . . . Every day he strides up the street, and when he finds his enemy he rushes at him without a second's hesitation. What a meeting it is! They blend. It is neither John Small's cat nor my cat. It is a new creature. They meet in joint convention, with a quorum of both bodies present. And such an attention to business. How the fur does fly! The marks that John Small's cat bears after one of those meetings can never be described. He becomes protoplasm and finally grows back into a cat. . . .

Anthony's nature came out finely one day as the result of a little deception. We brought in a stuffed cat made of cotton, but which looked so like a cat that it deceived the very elect. Anthony, intent upon his dinner, did not see the stuffed cat at once, but by and by he caught sight of it. What

a little tiger he changed to in a second! His back did n't arch: it hollowed, and he slowly edged up to the stuffed cat, waiting for an opening. To his amazement the stuffed cat sat bolt upright, fixing him with a glittering eye. Then Anthony cautiously but viciously led out with his left at the eye of the stuffed cat. The claw caught and the stuffed cat toppled toward Anthony. Anthony left the apartment. He left it suddenly. You could not see him leave, he left so suddenly. Then everybody roared. But Anthony was not afraid. He was only discreet. He reformed behind the door and crept in again. This time his smell told him of the cheat and he left the house and did not return for a week. His finer feelings had been hurt and he never resumed full fellowship with the house afterwards. He had no need to do it. He was welcome all over the neighborhood.

After moving several times from one street to another, Reed purchased, about the time of his first Speakership, an attractive and spacious house at 32 Deering Street, which he occupied during the remainder of his life and which ever since has been the home of his family. In a cheerful room on the third story and in the hall connected with it he kept the greater part of his general library, which was said to be the largest private library in Maine. It contained, exclusive of his law books and those in the French language, about five thousand volumes. The books were selected with excellent taste. His favorite poets were Tennyson, Burns, and Byron, and his favorite writers of English prose, Thackeray, Dickens, Carlyle, and Macaulay. He was also especially fond of Reade, Lever, Emerson, Lowell, and Stevenson. He was very fond of "Punch," of which his library contained thirty-five volumes, beginning at 1841. It was well

supplied with books of reference necessary for the study of the Scriptures, and his speeches and writings bear ample evidence that these books were for use rather than ornament. It contained the New Testament in half a dozen languages.

In addition to his English books he had some five hundred French volumes, chiefly made up of the classics and the best modern books in that language. He read French with great facility and could speak the language fluently and with a good accent. Shortly after he entered Congress, in order to perfect himself in the language, he kept a diary in French, and the work was continued until it nearly filled four manuscript volumes. It was prefaced by the explanation that it was written "only for practice in French. I cannot show it to any one to have it corrected, and I have not the time to correct it myself." It contained much about his private affairs, frequent references to the books he was reading, and to the business of the House, and occasionally a description of a dinner-party. It shows a wide range of French reading, in which he indulged while traveling, or at home when he had leisure.

The diary had many interruptions, for which he would upbraid himself, as the following entries will show.

February 25, 1886. *Friday.* I have frightfully neglected this diary. In truth, the past week I have been going out in society. I have eaten many dinners, and have attended some receptions. I have been going to bed very late. On account of this I have not had the time to write in the

journal, but I am through with it. The game is not worth the candle.

March 11, 1886. *Friday.* I am not at all satisfied with myself. I have forgotten for four days to write in my diary, and have forgotten what I have done.

The following is one of his accounts of a dinner-party: —

February 4, 1886. This evening I dined with Professor A. G. Bell, who invented the telephone. Present were Messrs. Long, Charles Emory Smith, Phelps, Major Powell, Dr. Billings, Prof. Baird, Senators Cullom and Butler of South Carolina, and several others; a good dinner. Mr. Bell told me that he found two deaf cats, white with blue eyes. Such cats are always deaf. He is studying the customs of these animals. These cats are very peculiar. When they are left to walk in the garden, they promenade by moving from time to time their heads from one side to the other, using their eyes instead of their ears. He intends to breed a race of deaf cats.

This is his reference to the first contest which he made for the Republican nomination for Speaker: —

January 16, 1886. At the beginning of the session I was elected candidate of the Republican Party for Speaker. There was a slight contest between Mr. Hiscock and myself for the votes of our friends, but I did not approach any one. Finally I succeeded in a manner very flattering to myself.

The work is full of his references to his French readings: —

April 18, 1885. *Friday.* . . . . I studied the Civil Code in French, and the last volume of Maine Reports which I found in my office. . . . I began to read also at home the "Letters of Madame de Sévigné" and the "Memoirs of Saint-Simon," and a history of the reign of Elizabeth from the Catholic

point of view, by the Abbé Destombes, which I bought in Brussels two years ago.

September 14. *Sunday.* I read this morning in the second volume of the "French Revolution" (Blanc), and did the same thing after dinner and during the evening.

September 30. During my trip to New York from here, I read "A Marriage in the World" by Octave Feuillet, which interested me. His style is so simple, so pure, that one can read his works easily. He does not make long détours, he does not employ many adjectives, he walks always leisurely on a straight course. He claims attention by gentle allurements. I have rarely read such books. I must read his masterpiece, "Monsieur de Camors." After I got home I read in the third volume of Louis Blanc.

March 1, 1886. *Monday.* Got up at half-past eight. Could not sleep all night, and took a vacation of two hours and a half. During this vacation I read "Sous les Tilleuls."

March 2, 1886. Got up at eight o'clock, but passed a bad night. Ought to have gone to bed without reading. The bed was not very well made. I went to the Capitol at half-past ten, buying, while passing Brentano's, a little copy of "Fables" of La Fontaine. . . . In the House we had a great debate on pensions, following the debate commenced by Mr. Henderson of Iowa. We were completely overthrown at the moment when Mr. Butterworth commenced a good speech which saved us. Mr. Butterworth was extremely fortunate in his address, and very brilliant. Mr. Wilson of the Democratic party made a very refined and very eloquent speech. This evening I finished "Sous les Tilleuls." It is a book which leaves a bad taste in the mouth. I have wasted my time.

March 3, 1886. Got up at half-past eight; walked to the Capitol. We passed the day in talking about nothing. Mr. Butterworth ended his speech of yesterday almost painfully. Mr. Norwood of Georgia spoke with a fine satire against Mr. Henderson, whom he harried without mercy. Mr. Breck-

inridge of Kentucky seized a good opportunity to deliver himself of a little piece of rhetoric which ended in a very eloquent peroration. Mr. Brown followed him in protecting the reputation of Colonel Dudley, the Commissioner of Pensions. Thus ended the debates of the day. I am in a state of extreme disgust. Without doubt this effort will be considered everywhere very fine, but it seems to me that these Southern gentlemen are victorious over us, and, humiliating fact, rightfully so. Why not end these wrangles over the Civil War, which is certainly past.

March 7, 1886. *Sunday*. . . . In the House everything was in order except action. In a word it was a gaseous day in which one could talk at discretion, or rather without discretion.

Walking was his favorite exercise, and he was accustomed on fair days to take the long walk from his residence to the Capitol and return. At his summer place on Grand Beach, Maine, he learned to ride a bicycle in a way that entertained his neighbors. He had boxes distributed along the beach which he could use to get on the bicycle when he had, either purposely or unintentionally, dismounted.

CHAPTER XII

RULES — THE MILLS BILL

Reed signalized his assumption of the leadership of the minority by renewing his effort made in the preceding Congress to change the rules of the House, and he made a strong attack upon them. His former attempts had been defeated, once by filibustering and again by a hostile Democratic majority, which, however, had been reduced on that vote from its normal strength of seventy, to eleven. He claimed that the code of rules was a systematic outrage on government by a majority, and that "the only way to do business inside the rules was to suspend the rules. The object of the rules appeared to be to prevent the transaction of business." Although one of the cherished policies of the slave-power had been to prevent Congress from infringing upon state rights, yet its purpose had been "rather to prevent discussion than to prevent action. They had a majority which could determine the action to be taken, but they could not throttle debate without rules." His fight was again destined to be without result, but it showed his sincerity concerning the subject on which his efforts were ultimately to be rewarded with success.

Cleveland in his messages had taken strong ground against the silver legislation, under which there were

coined great numbers of silver dollars, the value of which compared with gold was constantly dwindling. Reed, although probably a majority of his party was against him, strongly supported Mr. Cleveland in his attitude.

On July 6, 1886, Reed delivered the oration at the celebration of the Centennial of Portland. It was a notable address. The reference it contained to his classmate, which has already been quoted, aroused the criticism of one of the clergymen of Portland who wrote Reed a letter from which the following is taken.

PORTLAND, ME., *July* 13, 1886.

The enclosed passage from my Sunday's discourse I was about to hand to a Portland paper for publication, but was persuaded from doing so. . . . In speaking of those who passed from earth amid the horrors of civil war and of the bright companion of his youth the orator said, "Can it be that I shall never look into those cheerful eyes again? Can it be that neither the quaint jest of the happier hour nor the solemn confidence of the heart will ever again fall upon the ear of friendship or of love? It can be no otherwise. He can only live in my memory. The dead however sweetly embalmed are but the dead." — Interpret this language as we may, it is not the sweet teaching of Christianity but of bitter and unlovely infidelity.

Reed's reply was in part as follows: —

WASHINGTON, D.C., 15 *July*, 1886.

I am in receipt of your favor and must confess my surprise at the construction your remarks put upon the passage which you quote. When I wrote the passage I had no intention to express any opinion on the subject of the immortality of the soul either for or against, especially against, nor do I think I have. That subject was not in my thoughts. I was dealing

only with feelings which concern this side of the grave. I think you would not have made the mistake had you *fully* given me credit in your mind for the good taste which I hope I possess, which would always prevent me from taking an occasion like July 6 to promulgate, even if I entertained them, any sentiments which would be offensive not merely to the majority of those present but even to a single one. If the public library gives you access to some words I said of another dead friend during the session of 1869, you may perhaps find at least the views I then expressed.

During this Congress there was little more than the absolutely necessary legislation, with a Democratic President and House and a Republican Senate. The inevitable tariff was brought forward in the House and took the form of the Morrison bill, from the name of the Chairman of Ways and Means. But Randall, the former Speaker, who had been deposed from leadership, had his revenge and was able by a union between his followers and the Republicans to defeat the measure.

The really serious attempt at tariff legislation took place in the following Congress. It failed to reach the statute books, but it made the issue clear for the next campaign.

At the December session of 1887 Carlisle was again chosen speaker, receiving 163 votes against 148 for Reed. Carlisle on taking the Chair went outside the usual routine of returning thanks for his election and made a speech in favor of tariff reduction. Cleveland's message to Congress, which was received during the same week, was confined to the same subject. The annual message had usually dealt with a great variety

of subjects, referring to the important work of the departments and presenting a general legislative programme for the session. The extraordinary course of limiting the annual message to a single subject imparted to that subject a prominence which compelled the attention of friends and foes. It clearly showed that Mr. Cleveland had fixed upon it as the issue upon which he was to go before the country the following autumn for reëlection. That it was to be the chief issue was made inevitable by the course of Mr. Blaine, the Republican leader. He was at the time in Paris but he had the habit of conducting political warfare with promptness and vigor, and he immediately joined issue with Mr. Cleveland in a striking interview which was cabled to the New York "Tribune."

The issue thus dramatically put forward by the respective leaders of the two parties pitched the key for discussion in the newspapers and in Congress. The House of Representatives inevitably became the theatre of war. Under the Constitution taxation bills were compelled to originate there, and the Democratic Committee on Ways and Means, over which Roger Q. Mills presided as chairman, brought forward the Mills bill. It was by no means a radical free-trade measure, but portions of it were sufficiently upon free-trade lines to raise the issue. The brunt of the fight for the opposition fell to Reed, both because he was the ranking man of his party in the committee and because he was its leader on the floor of the House. The debate was a memorable one, with Mills and Carlisle the leaders for

the Democrats and Reed and McKinley for the Republicans. Reed's speeches in the House on the tariff had usually been brief, but upon this bill he closed the general debate for his side in one of the longest speeches he ever made and as powerful a one, it may fairly be claimed, as was ever delivered in favor of protective duties in the House of Representatives. It will bear reading even to the present day, notwithstanding the threadbare character of the subject.

He began by a fling at the President's relation to civil-service reform, and hinted that the offices were used to help the cause of tariff reform. Mr. Cleveland, he said, was rapidly shaking the dust of civil-service reform off his feet. There was but one free trade and he was its prophet. "Whoever falls in battle in the service of this new Allah and its prophet, for him shall open the shining gates of the heaven of foreign missions and Federal offices." The President had declared in his message that tariff duties raised the price of dutiable articles "by precisely the sum paid for such duties," and that on all protected domestic articles the consumer paid "nearly or quite the same enhanced price." "That," declared Reed, "is the whole counsel of the Lord upon the subject." He then proceeded to apply this formula, reckoning the amount of real taxation by adding the amount of duties on foreign goods to all articles of a similar kind consumed in the country and he showed that the people had been robbed of some billions of dollars in a few years. To stop this incredible robbery was the first duty. That,

he declared, would be accomplished by striking off all duties upon all articles produced in the United States and by raising money by direct taxation.

But what do the friends of virtue propose to do with these wicked creatures? Sweep them out of existence with the strong hand of justice? Ah, no. They are still to live and still to flourish. They will have only the delightful punishment of being turned over to the melting eloquence . . . of the gentleman from Kentucky, while he explains his theory of fair plunder, of honest and decent robbery, with no restrictions save such as will be satisfactory to those good manufacturers who have been admitted to private interviews by the back stairs. [*Laughter.*] . . . The castles of these marauders are still to smile upon the hill tops, and the tall chimneys are still to break the sky line of this unhappy country. They are to be allowed to rob within seven per cent of what they rob now and as compensation they are to be turned loose upon the markets of the world where, according to the learned chairman, they are to reap larger wealth and pile up statelier millions. . . . Great heavens! these amazing plunderers had in their pockets fifteen thousand million dollars in 1882; had eight hundred millions a year since; in all nineteen thousand eight hundred millions or three thousand millions more than this whole country is listed for taxation, and the Mills bill proposes to give them more. [*Applause and laughter.*] Gentlemen of the other side, heroes of the new crusade, if you believe what you say, is it not ample time that this tribute cease? If the President is right, and you don't dare to doubt him, an annual tribute is paid protected manufacturers out of the pockets of the people more impoverishing than was ever exacted by an Oriental despot. . . . In the face of your plain duty to free the people from this iron yoke, you stand higgling about the amount of the tribute. If it be a tribute, be bold and sweep it away. Why do you hesitate? It is because every wind that blows, every sight that strikes their eyes, every sound that resounds in their ears, shows them the folly of their theories

and the absurdity of their logic. What use is it to tell the people of this empire that they have been robbed and plundered of one thousand million dollars every year?

He declared that he did not propose to defend protection.

It was born with the Republic. It is the faith and practice of every civilized nation under the sun save one. It has survived the assaults of all the professors of the "dismal science" called political economy. It has stood up against all the half-knowledge of learned men who never had sense enough to transmute their learning into wisdom. [*Great applause.*]

Mr. Frank Hurd of Ohio, a prominent tariff-reform member, or, as Reed called him, "the melodious child of free trade," who had been defeated for reëlection, had repeated a familiar argument which Reed stated and dealt with in the following fashion: —

If a laborer with two dollars in his pocket, won in a day in protectionist America, can buy in Liverpool for one dollar what he wants, and you make him pay two dollars to the Rhode Island manufacturer, don't you cheat him every day out of half his day? Dear departed friend, first great martyr in this great cause, why not put it the other way? If a poor laboring man in free-trade America, without a cent in his pocket and perhaps no pocket in his trousers, should find out that things cost the same in Rhode Island and Liverpool, would the happiness he would undoubtedly feel be anything more than an intellectual delight?

He said that something like envy was really at the bottom of some of the arguments on the other side.

Whenever I walk through the streets of that democratic importing city of New York and look at the brown-stone fronts, my gorge always rises. I can never understand why

the virtue, which I know is on the sidewalk, is not thus rewarded. I do not feel kindly to the people inside. But when I feel that way I know what the feeling is. It is good, honest, high-minded envy. When some other gentlemen have the same feeling they think it's political economy. [*Great laughter.*]

The cure for monopoly, he argued, was not to be found in free trade.

Call in the British! When the day comes when this Republic cannot save itself from a dozen of its own citizens I hope to be buried one thousand leagues under some respectable and permanent mountain range. . . . If the price is raised and maintained even for a short while it means ruin for the combination and still lower prices for consumers. That is one of the laws of God working for his children. Compared with one of the laws of Congress it is a leviathan to a clam.

Another catching phrase of the tariff-reform orators was, —

"The markets of the world." How broad and cool these words are! . . . You would imagine the markets of the world a vast vacuum waiting until now for American goods to break through, rush in and fill the yearning void. Will your goods go to Austria, to Italy, Germany, Russia, or France? Around all these benighted countries are the Chinese walls of tariff taxes.

The best market of the world was in America,

and you are asked to give up such a market for the "markets of the world"! Why, the history of such a transaction was told twenty-four hundred years ago. It is a classic. You will find it in the works of Æsop the fabulist. Once there was a dog. He was a nice little dog. Nothing the matter with him excepting a few foolish free-trade ideas in his head. He was trotting along happy as the day, for he had in his mouth a nice shoulder of succulent mutton. By and by he came to a

stream bridged by a plank. He trotted along and looked over the side of the plank and he saw the markets of the world [*great laughter*], and dived for them. A minute after, he was crawling up the bank, the wettest, the sickest [*great laughter*] the nastiest, the most muttonless dog that ever swam ashore.

After the general debate closed, the bill was for a long time in Committee of the Whole House for amendment, and Reed occasionally took part in the discussion under the five-minute rule.

Mills of Texas, the Chairman of Ways and Means, was not distinguished for restraint in the use of language, and he did not always keep his temper. One day Reed said of him that it seemed strange that when he was asked to explain the features of his bill, he "finds it necessary to fly into a passion, finds it necessary to go off into a defense of his own virtue." At another time, when Mills had charged the Republican party with being in favor of "free whisky," Reed retorted that he could not mean that, because "he knows there would not be enough Democrats left to make up the electoral ticket in half the states of the Union if they had confidence in his statement. [*Laughter and applause.*] Oh, the gentleman from Texas had better remember the position he occupies in this House, and divert himself with those things when he finds himself on the far-off pampas of his own Texas." [*Laughter and applause.*]

The bill passed the House by a majority of thirteen, which was slightly less than the usual Democratic majority, and Republican orators in the subsequent

campaign enlarged upon the ill omen supposed to attach to the figure of the majority and to the fact that it was cast on the anniversary of the battle of Bull Run.

Reed maintained his former position that the country should be suitably defended. On August 1, 1888, speaking on a proposition to authorize the building of guns, he said, "What I demand is that this House shall take practical action to bring us up abreast of the present and not let us lose ourselves in those clouds of patriotism, of capital, of 'sixty million of people,' all those glittering generalities which never yet built a cannon."

Until the election in November, 1888, the country had few other subjects for political discussion than the tariff. Reed's speech in the House was widely printed, and the campaign produced nothing else which so effectively presented the Republican side of that issue. General Harrison, the Republican candidate, conducted his campaign at his own home, where he addressed many delegations of visiting Republicans, and at the same time the country, in short and happy epigrammatic speeches. Harrison was chosen by a close vote in the doubtful states, but by a large majority in the Electoral College. The House was also carried by the Republicans, who retained possession of the Senate, and for the first time in sixteen years both Houses and the presidency were in the control of the same party.

CHAPTER XIII

SPEAKER—THE QUORUM

As soon as it had been determined that the House was to be Republican, an animated contest among the members elect was at once entered upon for the Speakership. Reed's position as leader of his party in the House made him the natural selection, but he was from one of the smaller states, remote from the center of population, and the argument founded on geography, logically not appealing but often convincing in our politics, was against him. His leading antagonist was McKinley, who had great personal popularity and who came from the important and centrally located state of Ohio. There were other candidates, among whom was Henderson of Iowa. Reed had many loyal friends, and among the foremost of them was Lodge, then a representative from Massachusetts, who was indefatigable in his efforts to bring support to Reed. He began the contest with New England solidly behind him. New York soon followed. His friends urged his skillful and bold leadership of his party in the House while in the minority, as a controlling reason for nominating him when it became the majority party. He had borne the brunt of the fighting; to him should come the recognition in victory which had been accorded him in

defeat. Otherwise he would be deprived of his fair share in the triumph of his party.

The vote proved to be extremely close in the Republican caucus. No candidate had a majority on the first ballot, although Reed was a strong leader and lacked only six votes of receiving the necessary number. On the second ballot he gained seven votes from the forces of the other candidates, and received eighty-five votes, or one more than a majority. Thus he did not owe his nomination to a coalition with any other candidate. The choice of the caucus was ratified in the House when it assembled on December 2, 1889. Reed received the votes of 166 members to 154 for Carlisle.

The Speakership brought Reed a far broader opportunity for public service than he had ever before enjoyed. It gave him the leadership of the popular House of Congress, a leadership not merely formal in its nature but with powers that made the office almost superfluously strong. Ever since the first Congress the appointment of committees had been vested in the Speaker. This power gave him an influence with those members who received the most coveted appointments. On the other hand, that influence was to some extent offset by the effect of the disappointment of the other and more numerous members who had placed a higher estimate upon their own capacity than was reflected in the appointments which the Speaker gave them. It had also been the rule for nearly a quarter of a century for the Speaker to be *ex officio* Chairman of the powerful Committee on Rules. These special

powers made him much more than a nominal leader, and they cast on him a responsibility which he could not evade and which to our modern Speakers has usually been a source of unpopularity.

Reed's speech on taking the chair was a model, not merely in point of brevity but in the substance of what he said. After thanking the House for the honor, he said that the duties and responsibilities of the Speakership were "both political and parliamentary. So far as the duties are political, I sincerely hope they may be performed with a proper sense of what is due to the people of this whole country. So far as they are parliamentary, I hope, with equal sincerity, that they may be performed with a proper sense of what is due to both sides of this Chamber."

The House contained a large number of strong men. On the Democratic side were Carlisle, Randall, Crisp, Wilson, Turner, and Springer. On the Republican side were McKinley, Butterworth, Hitt, Cannon, Henderson, Dalzell, Dolliver, La Follette, Sherman, and Payne. The list of men who afterwards attained distinction might easily be prolonged.

The Republican majority would have been an extremely narrow one for the transaction of business, even if the opposition had not employed filibustering as a parliamentary weapon. A quorum of the House consisted of 166 members on the day of Reed's election, and that was the precise vote which he received. By the subsequent death of a Republican member it was reduced to 165. It was obvious that only upon rare

occasions would the Republican party be able again to marshal so many of its members as on the opening day of the session. If the burden of maintaining a quorum was to be borne by that party, evidently there would be either no legislation at all or only such as its opponents would agree to have enacted. In the partisan temper that then prevailed there was little likelihood of the transaction of any except the most formal business by the consent of both sides.

With the parties so nearly balanced violent partisanship was not long in breaking into a flame. The difficulty first assumed an acute phase upon the approval of the Journal, which is usually a perfunctory matter of business. The somewhat censorious Bland of Missouri insisted that the Speaker, in advance of the adoption of rules by the House, should recognize him on a call for tellers. There was a partisan discussion upon this subject, and the Democratic leaders approached the limit of parliamentary courtesy in their criticism of the Speaker. It was evident that no party legislation whatever could be accomplished under the practice which had prevailed from the beginning of the government of determining a quorum simply by the call of the roll, for the Democrats would sit silent when their names were called and it was impossible for the Republicans to marshal the necessary 165 members.

The issue was finally drawn in a way not to be evaded. On January 29, 1890, Dalzell reported from the Committee on Elections a resolution in a contested election case awarding the disputed seat to a Republican. Crisp

raised the question of consideration, and only 163 members responded, or two less than a quorum. Not merely was it beyond the power of the Republicans to produce a quorum at that time, but it appeared equally certain that they would not be able to produce one at any time during that Congress. It would require the presence of all the living Republican members on the opening day, and that every man of them could be marshaled at any one time did not seem to be within the bounds of possibility. The time had come when the only alternatives were either a complete surrender or something which in the light of the precedents of a century would be revolutionary.

Reed had carefully planned to meet the emergency which had long seemed to him inevitable and had determined upon his course. But the element of doubt was whether his party associates in the House would sanction the radical course which he meditated. He was intending to overturn not merely Democratic precedents but Republican precedents as well. Times almost without number the leaders of his own party had maintained that the constitutional quorum was to be determined by the roll-call, and not by the bodily presence of members. The position had never seriously been questioned that, if a majority of the representatives failed to answer to their names on the calling of the roll, there was no quorum present for the transaction of business, even if every member might actually be present in the hall of the House. The leader of any party might well doubt whether he would be

sustained in overturning a construction so long established and acquiesced in by all parties. Reed had made up his mind upon the course he should pursue. He did not propose to surrender and if his party failed to sustain him he had determined to resign the Speakership and to retire from the House.[1]

Thus it came about that when only 163 members answered to their names, the House was not embarked upon the usual succession of fruitless roll-calls. Instead of ordering the roll to be called again, Reed calmly said: "The Chair directs the clerk to record the names of the following members present and refusing to vote." He then proceeded to name a number of Democrats and among them Carlisle and other Democratic leaders who were present when their names were called and who refrained from voting.

At once the House was in an uproar. There was an explosion as violent as was ever witnessed in a legislative body. The Speaker's recital of the names was interrupted by passionate remonstrance. His course was denounced as revolutionary. For a considerable time the tumult stopped the business of the House. Reed remained unruffled, and when the noise would for a moment subside he would add to his count of Democrats present and not voting. One member of much dignity, but not conspicuous for a sense of humor,

[1] My authority for this statement is Hon. Elihu Root. Mr. Root informed me that in advance of his ruling Reed had told him of his purpose to make it, and that if his party did not support him he should resign and practice law in New York. An understanding was arrived at that he was to enter Mr. Root's law office.

gravely arose with a book in his hand and said: "I deny your right, Mr. Speaker, to count me as present and I desire to read from the parliamentary law on that subject." Reed raised a hearty laugh by coolly saying in reply, and with his customary drawl: "The Chair is making a statement of fact that the gentleman from Kentucky is present. Does he deny it?"

After the noise had subsided sufficiently for the Speaker to make a connected statement he proceeded to state the question to the House, "The Chair treats this subject in orderly fashion, and will submit his opinion to the House, which, if not acquiesced in by the House, can be overruled on an appeal taken from the decision." He then proceeded to state his opinion, in a few words and yet so weightily that, while the argument might be greatly amplified, it could not be more clearly put. He held that the Constitution contemplated that when a majority of the members were actually present there was a quorum for the transaction of business whether they voted or refused to vote. Referring to the constitutional power of the House to compel the attendance of absent members, he said: "If members can be present and refuse to exercise their function, to wit, not be counted as a quorum, that provision would seem to be entirely nugatory. Inasmuch as the Constitution only provides for their attendance, that attendance is enough. If more was needed the Constitution would have provided for more."

This ruling was followed by a scene of disorder even greater than that which had preceded it, and for three days the House was a perfect bedlam. The Speaker was denounced not only in parliamentary but in unparliamentary terms. All the old weapons in the arsenal of obstruction were brought into play and one after another Reed ruled them out of order. Some of them he declared were not even subject to an appeal from the Chair. One member, Breckinridge of Kentucky, shouted: "The Speaker's decision is clearly corrupt." Reed was accused of being a czar and of usurping jurisdiction. His decision was pronounced revolutionary, which was doubtless correct when it is compared with the decisions made by Speakers for a great number of years. There was little difficulty in showing in the argument which followed that the Speaker had overruled all the precedents, and that he himself, in common with all the members of the House who had borne any important part in its proceedings, had recognized the opposite procedure. He did not pretend that he was obeying the precedents of the House, but admitted that he was overruling them. He simply reverted to the terms of the Constitution and claimed that the quorum established by that instrument was a present and not a voting quorum. During those three days of wild excitement apparently the coolest man in the House was the Speaker.

The debate was noteworthy in point of ability, Carlisle, Crisp, and Turner distinguishing themselves on the Democratic side while McKinley, Cannon, and

Butterworth led on the Republican side. Perhaps the ablest speech of the debate was made by Butterworth. He argued that a representative was chosen to serve not merely his own constituency but the whole country, and that he had no warrant to attempt to paralyze the action of the House, but that the country had a right to require that he should be in his place and perform his duties. "For that reason the Constitution provides that those who are here may, by force, bring the rest of the members into this Hall, not merely to serve their own constituents, but to serve that broader constituency, the people of this country whose servants they are." What was the object of the power to compel members to attend?

> To leave the House in precisely the same condition as before they were brought in, a condition which rendered it necessary to bring them in to change and improve it? Was this authority conferred by the Constitution only to enable us to go through the farce of bringing in the absentees and learning after each member has been seated in his place that, while under the Constitution he is actually personally present to make a quorum to do business, yet when an attempt is made to do the thing which required his presence, he at once by merely closing his mouth becomes constructively absent? Or he may, in fact, while present, arise in his place and assert that he is absent, and we must take his word for it. What an absurdity on the face of it, no matter how sanctified by age! It is the weapon of the revolutionist. It is the weapon of anarchy.

At last the question whether the Speaker's decision should be overruled was submitted to the House. A mere handful of the Republicans voting with the Democrats would have overthrown the Speaker and his

ruling. But his party stood with him to a man. After much filibustering the ruling was sustained.

Thus was established the most important landmark in the parliamentary practice of the House. It seems difficult to believe that there should ever have been any other construction put upon the Constitution than that the power to compel the attendance of absent members in order to secure a quorum was for the purpose of enabling the House to transact the business of the country, and not simply for the purpose of permitting those who were present to look upon the faces of those who had been absent. Not merely did the Supreme Court subsequently sustain the constitutionality of Reed's ruling, but within a brief period, by the indorsement of his party antagonists, it was destined to become the settled law of the House. In the two next succeeding Congresses the House was controlled by the Democrats and the ancient practice was reëstablished. At an important juncture they found themselves unable to procure a quorum from their own ranks. And as Reed had established the new precedent, so there came to him the distinction of forcing his antagonists to ratify it. After his retirement from the Speakership he had become the leader of the Republicans upon the floor. He inaugurated a determined filibuster and under his lead the members of his party declined to vote. For weeks the House was unable to make the slightest progress in the transaction of business. It was bound hand and foot. The deadlock was at last broken by the adoption of a rule providing that

a member who was present might be counted for the purpose of making a quorum, whether he voted or not. The fact that the counting under the Democratic rule was to be done by two tellers made no difference in the principle involved, and ever since that time the rule of a present instead of a voting quorum, as established by Reed, has been the rule of the House, no matter by what party it has been controlled.

The ruling has resulted in saving a great amount of the time of the House, and has facilitated the transaction of its business. It has done away with a system which might in critical times produce a paralysis of our popular representative assembly, and it has conduced to party responsibility. This achievement stands as a signal triumph for Reed's clearness of vision; and in the strength with which he maintained his position against tremendous pressure and in the face of the precedents of a century, and in the serene courage and self-control with which he bore himself amid those violent and stormy scenes without parallel in the history of Congress, it furnishes convincing proof of the greatness of his character.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHERMAN SILVER–PURCHASE BILL

The decision concerning the quorum enabled the Republicans to dispose of their legislative programme. Not the least important problem pressing for solution was that relating to the use of silver in the currency. The coinage of the so-called Bland-Allison dollars, which were legal tender, had resulted in adding to the currency a vast quantity of silver dollars, the bullion value of which was very much less than that of the gold dollar. It was the policy of the government to maintain the parity of all its money, and so long as the treasury stock of gold was sufficient, the value of the dollar, whether paper or silver, or whatever its character, was equal to that of the gold in a gold dollar. But it had become apparent that a too heavy burden was being placed upon the gold reserve, which had originally been created for the redemption of the greenbacks. That reserve was none too large in times of stress for the three hundred and odd millions of greenbacks, but when there was added a more than equal amount of legal-tender silver dollars, the strain was certain to become too great the instant that a financial crisis occurred.

A large minority of the Republican members and a majority of the Democrats favored the free coinage

of silver. Without doubt a majority of both Houses of Congress would have voted in favor of a measure to that end, providing it had been squarely presented. Reed was strongly opposed to free coinage. Representing his own views and that of a majority of the Republican members, he did his utmost to prevent the passage of a free-coinage bill. It would have been a simple device for the President, who did not favor free coinage, to interpose the veto. But he was a candidate for reëlection, and his friends believed that a veto would destroy his prospect of being again chosen. There appeared to be some doubt what his action would be. But in any event they did not desire to put him in the heroic attitude of saving the public credit by consciously throwing away his chance of reëlection and ensuring the choice of a Democrat as his successor. As he was destined to defeat in any event, in the safe light of subsequent wisdom it would have turned out to be better for the country and for his own fame, if a free-coinage bill had been passed and vetoed. But Reed was so strongly opposed to free coinage that he did not care to take any chances of its becoming law. The passage of some sort of a silver bill was inevitable and he strove to make it as far as possible from free coinage. A compromise was agreed upon which provided that 4,500,000 ounces of silver should be purchased each month in the open market, and that treasury notes, redeemable in gold, should be issued up to the actual cost of the silver. The large party who believed that it was necessary to "do something for silver," and some of those who were

interested in the production of the metal joined forces with the gold-standard members and substituted this policy for free coinage. It was contended that the purchase of so much silver each month would raise the price of the metal and diminish the gap existing between the intrinsic values of the silver and the gold dollar. An act was passed on those lines and was fortunately destined to a very brief life. Reed subsequently said of this act: "That it then and there saved this country from the free coinage for which every Democratic leader was then clamoring, and on which they are now silent, I do know."

Another important feature of the Republican policy was a revision of the tariff. It was necessary to reduce the revenue, and this was accomplished chiefly in two ways, by removing the duty on sugar and by placing the duty on many articles so high as to reduce importation and thereby cut down the revenue derived from them. Some duties were made much too high, even from the standpoint of the Republican policy of protection. The popular feature of the law was found in the reciprocity amendments, put there at the insistence of Blaine, who was at the time Secretary of State. Another important party measure was the so-called Force Bill, which provided for United States marshals to supervise national elections. This measure was strongly resisted even in the Republican caucus, and after a contest lasting three days was finally adopted only by a majority of one. That an important measure which so evenly divided the party should have

received its practically unanimous support in the House affords a striking example of the rigid discipline and the closeness with which party lines were then drawn. Cannon, who had with signal ability led the attack on the bill in the caucus, accepted the decision and reported to the House from the Rules Committee the order giving the measure the right of way.

Among the charges made against Reed's conduct in the Chair was one that he impaired what was called the "freedom of debate." He was in favor of permitting the House to decide, in any given debate, when it had heard enough of talking. The "previous question" had been developed long before Reed's day. It had been made necessary because, as the size of the House increased, debate was often indulged in for the purely physical purpose of delay. On one occasion a member had held the floor continuously for twenty-four hours, and the substance of what he said could doubtless have been compressed within the compass of a few minutes. To permit a man, under the pretense of debating, to monopolize the time of the House, to prevent it from taking action, and to consume the time of the other members as well as his own, never impressed Reed as conspicuously illustrating the freedom of debate. In the picturesque diction of Representative Charles B. Landis, of Indiana, "he did not gag debate, he simply gagged the horse-traders in a public place who sought to gag business. He thought that a man who had a private balloon to inflate should hire a field." The same gentleman observed, upon the

counting of the quorum: "He believed that when a burly demagogue shouted until the acoustics bled, it was prima facie evidence that he was in the vicinity, and could be counted." [1]

Since the Civil War there has been no session of the House of Representatives characterized by the partisan acrimony that marked the first session of the Fifty-first Congress. The Speaker was the central object of attack, and he bore himself throughout with that remarkable coolness and good nature which under the circumstances was the most striking proof of real courage. Mr. Lodge says of Reed's conduct: —

> I followed and watched him through all that session of bitter conflict and stormy attack. Not only did he exhibit throughout the qualities I have mentioned, but, although he was capable of wrath and strongly combative, I never saw his good nature fail, or his ready wit turn, as it might well have done, to anger and fierce denunciation. I remember that, one evening, when obstruction had been employed for hours to prevent a vote, and everybody was tired and in a bad temper, I went up to the Speaker's desk and asked how long this business was to last. Mr. Reed, perfectly unruffled, turned around with a pleasant smile, and said: "We shall get a vote in about an hour. Springer has only two more pieces in his repertoire."

A political campaign following such a session was sure to be bitterly fought. The election in Reed's district was held two months in advance of the general election, and before the passage of the tariff bill. The ruling concerning the quorum attracted especial

[1] Article by Mr. Landis, in the Peru, Indiana, *Republican*.

attention in his personal campaign. It was something for which the initial responsibility was wholly upon him. On the stump he stoutly defended his course, which he declared was necessary to give vitality to our kind of government. "Of what use," he said at Portland, "was an election itself, that grand culmination of the power of the citizen, if, after all, nothing could be done without the sanction of the beaten party? What statesman could there be so foolish as to battle for power with responsibility when he could have the same power without responsibility?" He was received with such extraordinary enthusiasm throughout his district that he believed that he should be reëlected. Having been accustomed to small majorities, he hoped to receive fifteen hundred votes over his antagonist. But he won by the surprising plurality of 4516, which was much the largest that had ever been given him, and, with a single exception, four times what he had ever previously received.

He took a prominent part in the campaign throughout the country. Speaking at Pittsburg, April 26, 1890, he said: —

> If we are not to-day in the forefront of human progress, to have been followers of Abraham Lincoln in the years gone by is not an honor but a burning disgrace. Progress is of the essence of Republicanism. To have met great emergencies as they arose has been our history. To meet great emergencies as they shall arise must be our daily walk and duty or we cease to be. Hanging on to the old traditions is the business of the Democratic party, and it does that business well; we can never rival it. Politicians are only eleventh-hour men. They are worthy of their hire, but they never bear the

burden and heat of the day. If they cry aloud before their hour they only turn back the shadow on the dial.

He maintained that the election of national officers should be controlled by national laws. There would be no danger in the nation of the domination of the black man's vote, because the white race greatly outnumbered the black in the country.

If cheating at the polls be only a pious fraud, in South Carolina excusable, because the white man is superior in intellect though inferior in numbers, there can be no such excuse in the United States election, where the white man with his superior intellect is superior in numbers also!

He spoke to an enormous audience at New Haven on October 3. The New York "Tribune" said that no Republican ever received such an ovation in Connecticut. He denounced obstruction and said that at the previous session there had been over four hundred roll-calls, of which three hundred were as useless as the platform of the Democratic party. "It is a magnificent tribute to us, thus spending one whole month of our time calling over our own names."

At Champaign, Illinois, October 21, he spoke on the grounds of the University of Illinois to fifteen thousand people. "I am used," he said, "to the peaceful ways of the East and this multitude exercises a sort of terror on me, for this is the first time that I ever faced so big a crowd."

At Burlington, Iowa, on October 22, he was compelled to speak twice in order to reach the vast numbers who had assembled. On October 24, an enormous audience

greeted him in Chicago. "There was nothing in the Constitution of the Democratic party," he said, "to prevent it from being denunciatory of the greenback when we were issuing it for the salvation of the country and then being violently in favor of it when we were trying to make it as good as gold."

Speaking, October 23, at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to a great crowd of prosperous-looking farmers, he expressed his surprise and said that the assembly could hardly be made up of farmers, for he looked in vain "for the sad-eyed, poorly-clad men covered all over with mortgages and Democratic pity."

Everywhere it was the same story. The people turned out in multitudes to hear him, and with serious argument he mingled much witty banter and ridicule of his party antagonists. But his own triumphant reëlection and the vast crowds were no index of the result. The McKinley Tariff bill had been passed only a month before the general election. At once there was a general increase in prices, and especially in prices of articles in common use. Shrewd traders of all sorts reaped a rich harvest. Everything was laid to the tariff, whether particular duties had been changed or not, and when election day came around, the people, believing that they had been robbed, voted with enthusiasm for the Democratic candidates for Congress and gave that party the next House by a rousing majority.

Under the somewhat unpopular feature of our system by which a House that has just been repudiated

at the polls may continue to legislate, there still remained the short session of the Fifty-first Congress. Reed as the leader of his party was compelled, while still in the Chair, to endure with as much philosophy as he could command the triumph of his enemies. And he bore himself with self-control and good nature. His party antagonists however did not show themselves sportsmanlike winners and conducted themselves with a good deal of haughtiness. Their attitude was shown in their refusal to propose or vote for the usual perfunctory resolution of thanks to the Speaker, which it had been the long-established office of the minority to propose at the end of each Congress. Either no resolution would be presented or it must be presented by a Republican. On March 2, 1891, Mr. McKinley, the Republican floor-leader, offered the resolution. Instead of permitting its adoption by the ordinary voice vote, this extraordinary proceeding was made still more extraordinary by the demand by Mr. Mills, the Democratic leader, for the yeas and nays. The resolution passed by 156 to 118, the Democrats generally going on record against it. On the passage of the resolution Reed made the following response: —

After two long and stormy sessions, in some respects unparalleled in one hundred years, the House of Representatives of the Fifty-first Congress will soon pass with completed record into the history of the country and its works will follow it. What we have done is in large manner political. Whatever is political rouses the sternest, the most turbulent, the most unforgiving passions of the human race. Political action can never be justly viewed from a near

standpoint. Time and distance are needed for a ripe judgment and the verdict of history is the only verdict worth recording. To state in language which would seem adequate the achievements of this House would not be suitable to this time or this place. . . . If our deeds do not praise us, our words cannot. Confident as I am of the verdict of time on what we have done, I am still more confident that the highest commendation will be given us in the future, not for what measures we have passed, valuable as they are, but because we have taken so long a stride in the direction of responsible government. Having demonstrated to the people that those who have been elected to do their will can do it, henceforth excuses will not be taken for performance, and government by the people will be stronger in the land.

Towards those who have opposed what the majority of the House desired we can have no unkindly or personal feeling. Whoever offers battle to old convictions and faiths must expect battle.

During this Congress Reed was invited to attend a dinner of the "Blue Grass Club" which he declined in the following letter: —

SPEAKER'S ROOM, WASHINGTON, D.C.
28 *February*, 1890.

MY DEAR MR. CARUTH: —

I shall not accept the invitation tendered me by the Blue Grass Club. The reason is very simple. I notice that Jay F. Durham is President. Now Jay F. Durham assured me during the late "disturbances" that if they had me in Kentucky they would kill me. Knowing the said Durham to be a journalist, his declarations to me import absolute verity. I do not wish to be killed, especially in Kentucky where such an event is too common to attract attention. For a good man to die anywhere is of course gain; but I think I can make more by dying later and elsewhere.

Yours truly,

T. B. REED.

For the bitter hostility of the opposition Reed found rich compensation in the loyal friendship of his Republican colleagues. In the fierce fighting of that Congress they stood by him in unbroken ranks. At its close they asked him to sit for a portrait, which he consented to do, and it was presented to the House of Representatives. It was painted by Sargent; and although he was probably the most distinguished among the artists whose portraits of the Speakers hang in the House lobby, he was not strikingly successful in his portrait of Reed.

CHAPTER XV

AGAIN MINORITY LEADER — RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT HARRISON

The result of the Congressional elections in 1890 was to put the Democrats very strongly in control of the House, and to distribute again the political control of the two Houses and the Presidency, so that neither party could be held responsible for legislation. Crisp was elected Speaker. Reed was nominated for that office by his party, and became minority leader. He led a very small army, and he affectionately said of its members that "they behaved with gentleness and modesty, partly because they were very good men and partly because there were very few of them." A victory for the Democrats was foreshadowed in the next presidential election, and that party sought to make the character of its control of the House as appealing as possible to the country.

Under the inspiration of the leadership of Mr. Cleveland, who was sternly in favor of the gold standard, against the majority of his party in the House, a considerable minority of the Democratic members arrayed themselves against the silver agitation. Mr. Williams of Massachusetts denounced the movement for the free coinage of silver as a proposition for national bankruptcy and to pay seventy cents on the dollar. He

declared that the Democrats who favored the free coinage of silver were attempting to make a Farmers' Alliance party out of the Democratic party. A vote had been taken upon which seventy Democrats had voted against free coinage. "These men," declared Williams, "are the Democrats of this House. [*Great laughter.*] Yes, you may laugh. Bad consciences require some consolation."

Reed skillfully fomented this difference. He saw that at the moment the line of cleavage in the enormous majority arrayed against him was upon the question of the money standard. Upon that question his position and that of Mr. Cleveland were identical.

The President-elect wished to have the silver-purchase clause of the so-called Sherman law repealed before he came into office, and a repeal bill was introduced near the end of the Fifty-second Congress. Mr. Bryan opposed the rule for its consideration in an impassioned speech in which he lamented the attitude of his party associates who favored it. Reed expressed a mock sympathy with Bryan, who, he said, had

> been in the habit of listening to the shoutings of the Democratic party from the highest citizen to the lowest in favor of "free silver," and what they call the "good of the people." Well, he finds now that, in power, even the Democratic party has got to obey the everlasting laws of common sense. [*Laughter.*] When they are in the minority they can throw their limbs about in all sorts of contortions; they can look any way that they think beautiful. But when they come into power, they have got to act according to the eternal verities and that is going to be a great shock to him on every occasion. [*Renewed laughter.*] He is going to see the leader

of the House quail on the subject of free trade. He is going to see "patriots" all around him operating as some of them are going to operate to-day, and I beg of him to summon to his assistance that stoicism which his countenance indicates, in order to help him in his very mournful future. [*Laughter and applause.*]

Reed played the part of minority leader after his old style, a little more kindly perhaps, but wittily and upon occasion with tremendous force of attack. He would sometimes make off-hand speeches under the rules of informal debate on the appropriation bills, and he would entertain both sides of the House with his philosophical suggestions. His speech on a proposed appropriation for educating the Indians affords a good example of his manner in debates of that character. He began with the assumption that the Indian had very many human characteristics. One thing that was most apparent in the human race was the determination that nobody should get very much ahead of the average.

If you actually wish to advance any set of people you cannot do it by educating one here and there, sporadically; you must make all the rest come forward or they will not permit some one to go ahead.

He could easily believe the stories that educated Indians sank back to the "blanket" condition of their tribes after they had returned to their savage homes, "because among Indians just as among white men public opinion, public sentiment, reigns supreme." The Indians could never be absorbed by the white

race unless the great gulf of ignorance was bridged over and

> the bridge has got to be wide enough to take in the whole Indian race in this country. We can never be united by little bridges that will bring an occasional Indian in contact with us. — Just as surely as public sentiment works among white men, just so surely public sentiment works among Indians; and a part of that public sentiment is the good old-fashioned human passion, envy. We hate to see people standing too much above ourselves. You ought to take all the Indians and educate them. What are you proposing to do? You are proposing to stop in mid-career.

During the first session of this Congress the practical political question that most concerned the Republicans related to the candidate to be nominated for the presidency. General Harrison was President. He was an extremely able lawyer. In point of intellectual capacity he has probably not been surpassed by any president since the Civil War. But he was cold and without personal magnetism. He had in very slight degree the faculty for making new friends, and indeed he chilled his old friends with an appearance of indifference which was probably only apparent but was as injurious in its effect upon his political fortunes as if it had been genuine.

The most powerful political office in Reed's district was the collectorship of Portland. He never displayed the slightest disposition to use the offices in his own interest, but he was naturally concerned not to have so influential an office in his own home put in hostile control. His position as the representative of Portland

and leader of his party in the House of Representatives made it in the highest degree proper, according to the political ethics of that time, that his opinion upon the question should be received with much weight. He acquainted the President with his views on the subject. Reed expressed his disgust over the appointment when it was finally made, in the following characteristic fashion: "I had but two enemies in Maine, and one of them Harrison pardoned out of the penitentiary and the other he appointed collector of Portland."

As the sequel of the ensuing presidential election proved, there was much indifference on both sides. The following quotation from a letter from Reed to Charles Fairchild of Boston will serve to show his view of the subject: —

> Blaine is out and we are face to face with a Siberian solitude. I don't know what will happen but I beg to say to you as an influential Massachusetts man that if any ice chest is to hold our fortunes you must not ask me to come to Massachusetts during the campaign if you send a delegation which is for the said ice chest. Don't forget this and find fault with me. I have spent my life taking political pills but my powers of deglutition are after all limited. B. Harrison would be dead to start with.

A similar opinion, but applied to both Cleveland and Harrison, appears in a letter from Colonel Ingersoll to Reed: —

July 30, 1892.

My dear Friend: —

All the Ingersolls, Browns and Farrells enjoyed to the utmost that article of yours on the two Congresses. It is unanswerable, admirable in every way, full of sense, logic

and facts, and it has wit enough, so that it can safely be "warranted to keep in any climate." You have painted Holman's portrait to perfection. I know exactly how he looked at that "Solemn moment." The article should be used as a campaign document — if there is to be a campaign.

At present each party would like to find some way to beat the candidate of the other without electing its own.

Long life to you.

Yours always,

R. G. Ingersoll.

The reference in Colonel Ingersoll's letter was to an article by Reed in the "North American Review" of July, 1892, comparing the Houses of the Fifty-first and Fifty-second Congresses. It contained a brilliant attack on the Democratic House, and is well worth reading to-day. Referring to the character of the Democratic majority, he said that it presented "the dead level of a Dutch landscape, with all its windmills, but without a trace of its beauty and fertility." Reed was present at the Republican National Convention at Minneapolis, and his appearance was made the occasion of the most spontaneous ovation that the Convention witnessed. Harrison was nominated and after a campaign spiritless on both sides, Cleveland was elected President in a very light vote.

On the last day of the session, Reed, notwithstanding the attitude of the minority towards him in the preceding Congress, proposed on behalf of his party associates the customary resolution of thanks to the Speaker. His speech in support of the resolution however showed that he had not forgotten the treatment

he had received. He declared that the Speakership was a very high office. No attack open or covert could be made upon it "without leaving a legacy of disorder," not because the Speaker himself was sacred but because he embodied the House and its dignity and power.

> If at any time, in the heat of passion, action has been taken which has been thus inimical to the public good and the public order, let us leave to those who so acted the honor or the shame, and in no way give to their example the flattery of an imitation. . . . Therefore, placing patriotism above partisanship, placing duty above even a just resentment, notwithstanding we do not approve of the parliamentary law of the Speaker and his associates and deem that the system reëstablished is undemocratic and unwise, nevertheless by offering the customary resolution, we tender to the Speaker of this House the expression of our belief that he, like all his predecessors, has performed the trying duties of his office with upright intention and honorable purpose.

CHAPTER XVI

SILVER-PURCHASE REPEAL

The election of 1892 had resulted disastrously for the Republicans and the stalemate in the control of the government was broken. With Mr. Cleveland as President, there were chosen a Democratic House and Senate, although the latter body was controlled by that party by a very slender majority. The Republicans however had gained forty seats in the House, and when they nominated Reed as their candidate for Speaker he became the leader of a strong and determined minority. At no time in his career did he show to better advantage as a parliamentary fighter than in this Congress. He was indeed only the leader of the minority, and he cannot be compared with himself as the floor-leader of the majority because he never held that position. Whenever he was leader of the majority party, it made him the Speaker of the House. He was in his physical and intellectual prime, and his experience, running through sixteen years on the floor and in the Chair, had brought about a development of his own powers and given him a command of the procedure of the House which made him a dangerous antagonist.

The President had summoned Congress to meet in extraordinary session on August 7, 1893, to repeal the so-called Sherman Silver law. That was the first

subject to engage the attention of the House. The Silver Purchase Act of 1890 did not have the hoped-for effect of sustaining the bullion value of the silver dollar. On the other hand, after a temporary advance, the price of silver had gone steadily down. During the three years that the act had been in force the Treasury had invested more than $140,000,000 in silver bullion and had issued treasury notes in payment, which were a charge upon the gold reserve. But the silver bullion lay an uncoined and inert mass in the vaults of the Treasury, and although its acquirement had vastly increased the gold obligations of the government it did not augment by a particle the ability of the government to meet them. On the slender gold reserve of $100,000,000 there was thrown the burden, not merely of redeeming more than three times that amount in greenbacks, but of redeeming also the treasury notes issued in payment for the silver and of maintaining at a parity with gold some hundreds of millions of light-weight silver dollars.

As a result the Treasury had fallen into a very critical condition. There was a genuine fear that the government could not maintain gold payments. Not merely was the condition of the Treasury serious but the financial condition of the country speedily became appalling. Business slackened; securities became depressed; American stocks and bonds held abroad were sold in our markets and the exportation of their purchase-price still further reduced the stock of gold in the country; banks suspended payment, railroad after rail-

road went into the hands of receivers, and there were witnessed all the evidences of an acute financial crisis.

The Democratic platform on which Cleveland was elected had declared for a radical reduction of the tariff. It was asserted by a large section of the Republicans that the promise of what was called free trade, ratified as it had been at the election, was responsible for the derangement of industrial and financial conditions. Undoubtedly the threat of radical reductions of the tariff had imposed caution on prudent manufacturers and caused them to prepare for possibly rough weather by taking in sail; but the condition of the currency was so menacing that it is difficult to believe that the tariff was the only or indeed the chief cause.

It was a matter of much doubt whether the President could secure the desired repeal. Within a month before his inauguration a rule for the consideration of a repeal bill had been defeated in the House, a large majority of the Democrats voting against it. Would it meet a more friendly reception from his party at the extraordinary session? It seemed likely that the balance of power would be held by the Republicans. Was there danger that, in order to defeat the President and embarrass his administration, they would "play politics"? Whatever doubt existed upon that subject was speedily dispelled. It became known that Reed stood firmly with the President. The Purchase Act, it is true, had been passed during his Speakership, but he had consented to it, not because he favored it

as a proposition standing by itself, but because he believed it necessary in order to prevent something he regarded as disastrous in the extreme. To his mind the practical alternatives were the passage of the purchase bill or the passage of a bill for free coinage. Between those alternatives he could not hesitate. But the situation was very different at the special session. There was presented only the naked question of repeal, and upon that question he brought his powerful aid to the support of the President.

The debate that ensued upon the introduction of the bill was memorable in point of ability, and leading orators in the two parties could be found contending upon either side.

Reed made the principal speech for the Republicans, and for nearly two hours he argued for repeal. The Sherman Act, he said, had no defenders.

> The silver men, although they were glad to get it, stood prepared to declare that it was not what they wanted. Those who had yielded to the demand for that act in the earnest hope that what they desired might turn out to be just and right were in no condition to defend it at all. It had not answered their hopes. Wherever there is an attack upon one side and no defence on the other, there is sure to be a shining victory.

Referring to the "crime of 1873," which was the alleged stealthy demonetization of silver, he said he was amazed that the charge had lived so long.

> Why I myself have heard a man — in this very House of Representatives — denounce the demonetization of silver as stealthy and "fiendish," and he himself introduced the bill on the floor of this House and squarely and openly declared

that a double standard was impossible, and that the gold standard was the only thing we could possibly have. [*Laughter and applause.*]

It had been answered so often that he should not burden his speech with the proofs.

I shall simply content myself with saying that there never was a more open, straightforward discussion since the beginning of time than that by which silver was demonetized. . . . What then is the pathway of duty? The unconditional repeal. That will either give relief or not. If not then we must try something else and the sooner the better. . . . It is such a pity that we had to waste so much time in this weary welter of talk.

We stand in a very peculiar position, we Republicans, to-day. [*Laughter.*] The representative of the Democratic party just chosen President of the United States finds himself powerless in his first great recommendation to his own party. Were he left to their tender mercies [*laughter*], the country would witness the spectacle of the President of its choice overthrown by the party charged with this country's government. What wonder then that he appeals to the patriotism of another party whose patriotism has never been appealed to in vain. [*Applause on the Republican side.*] Never, I say, in vain. The proudest part of the proud record of the Republican party has been its steadfast devotion to the cause of sound finance. When this country was tempted to pay its bonds in depreciated money, the Republican party responded with loud acclaim to that noble sentiment of General Hawley that every bond was as sacred as a soldier's grave. It cost us hard fighting and sore struggle, but the credit of this country has no superior in the world. [*Applause on the Republican side.*] When the same arguments heard to-day were heard fifteen years ago, sounding the praises of a depreciated currency and proclaiming the glories of fiat money, the party of Abraham Lincoln marched steadily towards specie payments and prosperity. [*Applause.*] What we were in our days of victory, the same are

we in our days of defeat. Champions of true and solid finance. [*Applause.*] And when the time comes, as it surely will come, for us to lead this land back to those paths of prosperity and fame which were trodden under Republican rule for so many years, we shall take back with us our ancient glory undimmed by adversity; our ancient honor unsullied by defeat. [*Prolonged applause on the floor and in the galleries.*]

A very large majority of the Republicans voted for the repeal and it passed by a great majority.

Mr. Cleveland displayed a resolute courage in pressing the measure, but he achieved a large measure of unpopularity with his party, which was in favor of free coinage as was afterward clearly shown. That his efforts prevented the currency of the country from falling speedily to the silver standard there can be no doubt. The contest was not finally won. Other battles remained to be fought. But it would have been lost but for the Silver-Purchase repeal. And those who believe that incalculable damage would have come upon the country by the depreciation of its currency and its departure from the established standard of the civilized world, will hold in grateful remembrance the patriotic self-sacrifice and the stern and heroic courage of Grover Cleveland.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WILSON BILL

The next important measure in the Democratic programme was the repeal of the national election law, which provided for the presence of United States officers at the polls at national elections. That measure had from its first enactment been unpopular with the Democratic party and it was but natural, when that party succeeded to the control of the government, that the law should be repealed. Reed and his party supported the law. Among all the various arguments put forward against repeal the strongest was based upon the common interest of all parts of the country in honest national elections. An election of a governor or a legislature in South Carolina was a concern of the people of that state, and the principle of home rule would ordinarily require that they should be permitted to conduct the election in their own way. But an election of members of Congress and of presidential electors was a common concern of the whole country. Violence and fraud in one state would equally affect the remotest states of the Union. A man in Florida or Texas would have no ground of complaint if Maine or Oregon should fairly give the decisive votes which should establish in the government of the nation a system of policies in which he did not believe.

But he would have the strongest ground of complaint if the result in the latter states should be brought about by violence and fraud. The right to regulate the choice of agencies of the national government inhered in the very idea of nationality.

The arguments against repeal, however valid they may have been, did not avail to save the law, and it was repealed at the special session, along with the silver law.

The third great party measure to be brought forward was the reduction of the tariff. The Ways and Means Committee was presided over by William L. Wilson of West Virginia, a man of engaging personality and an orator of no mean quality. He had associated with him in the committee some of the strongest men in his party, among them Bryan, Cockran, Turner, and McMillin. The bill was reported to the House very early in the December session. It was not an extreme measure except in respect to a comparatively small number of duties.

A long debate ensued in Committee of the Whole, in which Reed frequently took part in short speeches covering with ridicule the different paragraphs of the bill as they came up for amendment. His great contribution to the debate was made February 1, 1894, when he closed for the Republicans. On that day the scene in the House of Representatives was an extraordinary one. The galleries were crowded to suffocation, even the corridors of the Capitol were packed, and by common consent the unusual course was taken

of admitting the families and friends of members to vacant places on the floor of the House. Every inch of room was occupied by members and senators, and by ladies, many of whom occupied the seats of members. It may well be doubted whether the vast hall had ever before presented so brilliant a spectacle.

The burden of closing the debate for the Republicans fell to Reed alone; that for the Democrats was divided between the Speaker, who left the Chair, and the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means. Reed spoke first and was followed by the Speaker and by Wilson. The occasion was an inspiring one to Reed. His heroic figure fitted well into the surroundings and as he swept steadily and majestically into his argument his hold upon his audience constantly strengthened, and when he took his seat, after speaking an hour and a half, the loud cheers that died away only to begin again afforded a deserved tribute to the greatness of his effort.

The speech will lose by condensation, and since it cannot be reproduced here in its entirety, perhaps the best remaining test of its quality may be afforded by extracts from it which may fairly serve as examples of the whole.

The history of protection has been most remarkable. Fifty years ago the question seemed to be closed. Great Britain had adopted free trade, the United States had started in the same direction, and the whole world seemed about to follow. To-day the entire situation seems to be reversed. The whole civilized world except Great Britain has become protectionist, and the very year last passed has witnessed the

desertion of English principles by the last English colony which held out. This has been done in defiance of the opinions of every political economist in England who wrote prior to 1850, and of most of those who have written since.

When you add to this that the arguments against it have seemed so clear and simple that every schoolboy can comprehend them and every patriot with suitable lungs could fill the atmosphere with the catchwords [*laughter*], the wonder increases that in every country it should still flourish and maintain its vigor. Ten years ago it was equally true at one and the same time that every boy who graduated from college graduated a free trader and that every one of them who afterward became a producer or distributor of our goods became also a protectionist. . . .

I have here an article in the "Fortnightly Review," wherein Mr. J. Stephen Jeans, a British free-trade writer, in December, 1892, declared that "America has for many years enjoyed an amazing degree of prosperity, so much so indeed that to use the eloquent words of Edmund Burke, 'Generalities which in all other cases are apt to heighten and raise the subject have here a tendency to sink it. Fiction lags after truth, invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.'"

When I read these words I recalled a scene in this House, and said how differently men look at the same things. Here is a cool-blooded Englishman, who, in talking of the "not unreasonable hopes" — I use his very words — which his countrymen entertain, "that the greatest market in the world and probably in the world's history is once again to be found lying at the feet of British industry and commerce," declares that "America has for many years enjoyed an amazing degree of prosperity, so much so, indeed," that he has to use the words of Burke to say that he cannot even describe it. And yet, in this very hall a member of the Committee of Ways and Means, himself a countryman of Edmund Burke and whose wonderful eloquence moved this assembly as I never saw it moved before, allowed himself, amid "laughter and applause on the Democratic side," to

compare this amazing prosperity to a "prolonged debauch," from which the country could rescue itself only by the free use of the committee's dilution of the original beverage. [*Laughter.*] It seems, however, almost a desecration to put the facts over against the figure of speech. . . .

Was that crusade the same as is waged here to-day? Are the gentlemen of the Ways and Means Committee legitimate successors of Bright and Cobden and the Anti-Corn-Law League? Not the least in the world. That was a fight by the manufacturers. This is a fight against the manufacturers. The manufacturers then desired no protection whatever. Turn over this big volume of Cobden's speeches until you come to the twentieth speech, seven years after he began; you will find hardly one allusion to protective duties to manufacturers, and even in the twentieth speech they are only alluded to to reiterate the declaration made in 1838 when the Anti-Corn-Law League began, that all duties were to be abolished so as to make food cheaper. [*Applause on the Democratic side.*] I am glad to see that my Democratic friends recognize a bit of truth, but I am afraid it is by mistake. It so happens, Mr. Speaker, the corn laws were not, as these Democrats in their ignorance imagine, for the protection of the farmer. [*Laughter.*] What Cobden was fighting was an odious law enacted to enhance the price of bread, for the benefit, not of the farmer, but of the aristocratic owner of land. Workingmen were clamoring for increase of pay. The manufacturers knew that decrease in the price of wheat was equivalent to higher pay. . . .

The men who made the fight were not philanthropists or saints. They were good, honest, selfish men, struggling for their own interests, and never lost sight of them. Down to their latest day they resisted lesser hours of labor, and were deaf to all improvements which led to the elevation of the working classes. They held firmly to the doctrine that "as wages fall profits rise." . . .

But all these questions of wages are to be met, says the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cockran), by our superior civilization, and he accuses me of "confessing that civilization at the highest level is incapable of meeting the compe-

tition of civilization at its lowest level!" [*Laughter on the Democratic side.*]

Now it is a great truth that civilization can successfully meet barbarism, but it must do it with brains and not with rhetoric. How often have I heard this and similar eloquent outbursts about our superiority, and therefore inevitable conquest of the inferior. Survival of the superior! That is not the way the naturalist put it. "Survival of the fittest" was his expression; survival of the fittest to survive, not the superior, not the loveliest, not the most intellectual, but the one who fitted best into the surroundings. Compare the strong Bull of Bashan with a salt-water smelt. Who doubts the superiority of the bull? Yet, if you drop them both into the Atlantic Ocean, I will take my chances with the smelt. [*Laughter.*] A little tomtit, insignificant as a bit of dust in the balance, cannot compare with the domestic swan either in grace, beauty, or power. Yet, if both were dropped from a balloon hung high in air, I would rather be the insignificant tomtit than the graceful swan. If I had a job to dig on a railway, the competitor for that job whom I should fear would not be my friend from New York (Mr. Cockran) [*laughter*], but some child of sunny Italy so newly imported that he had not grown up to the wages of this adopted country. . . .

Why did the working people of California object to the Chinese? Because they knew that if they swarmed here in sufficient numbers the law of wages would make our own wages impossible. Had the Chinese had the same wants, and been therefore forced to demand the same wages, they could have worshiped their ancestors here without let or hindrance. It was just because the higher civilization could not contend on a free field with the lower that the higher civilization had to put brains into the scale and protect itself. . . .

Let me restate this: Men in America demand high and higher wages because their surroundings erect what used to be luxuries into necessities. Men who come here are soon affected by these same surroundings and are soon under the same necessities. But Chinamen, because they sequester themselves from these surroundings, and bales of goods, because they cannot have the labor in them subjected to our

influences, ought to be under the restriction of law. I do not mean to make the comparison go on all fours and have the goods prohibited like the Chinese. I only meant to convey an idea. . . .

To hear the discussions in Congress you would suppose that invention dropped from Heaven like manna to the Jews. [*Laughter.*] You would suppose that James Watt reached out into the darkness and pulled back a steam-engine. It was not so. All invention is the product of necessities and of pressure. When the boy who wanted to go off to play so rigged the stopcocks that the engine went itself, he was not only a true inventor, but he had the same motive — personal advantage — that all inventors have, and like them was urged on by business necessities. . . .

As a further proof that invention is born of necessity, tell me why great inventions never come until the world is in such shape as to enjoy them? What would the Crusaders have done with railroads? There was not money enough in the world, or travel, or merchandise, to keep them going a week. [*Laughter.*] . . .

Therefore I say that the great forces of nature and the wisest inventions are alike unprofitable except for a large consumption. Hence, large consumption is at the basis of saving in manufacture, and hence high wages contribute their share to progress. If you once accept the idea that necessity is the mother of invention, instead of regarding invention as coming from Heaven knows where, you can see how high wages stimulate it. . . .

Our laws have invited money and men, and we have grown great and rich thereby. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Black) has noticed that men come here, and he does not want them to come; hence he is willing that our wages shall be lowered to keep people away. Well, this is not the time to discuss immigration; but while people are coming I am glad they have not yet imbibed the gentleman's ideas and have not yet begun to clamor for lower wages. I really cannot help adding that when the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Black) starts his reformed immigration of men who come here "unawed by influence and unbribed by gain," I

hope to be there, for it would be a sight hitherto unknown on earth of men who forsook their home without being either pushed or pulled. [*Laughter.*] . . .

Let me give one item, and the figures shall be furnished by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. Wheeler), who told me in your presence that the value of all the cotton raised in the United States was only $300,000,000, while the finished product of that cotton was worth $1,750,000,000. When cotton leaves the field, it is worth $300,000,000; when it leaves the mill, it is worth six times as much. On our own cotton crop alone we might in time make the profit on a billion and a half of manufactured goods. Nor is there anything to prevent such a result in a protective tariff.

Some men think, indeed this bill and its author's speeches proceed upon the supposition, that the first step toward gaining the markets of the world is to give up our own, just as if a fortified army, with enemies on all flanks, should overturn its own breastworks as the first preliminary to a march into the open. Even the foolish chivalry of the Marquis of Montcalm, which led him to his death on the Heights of Abraham, had not that crowning folly. Such is not the history of the world; such is not even the example of England. Tariff duties, whether levied for that purpose or for revenue, become a dead letter when we are able to compete with the outside world.

We are the only rival that England fears, for we alone have in our borders the population and the wages, the raw material, and within ourselves the great market which insures to us the most improved machinery. Our constant power to increase our wages insures us also continuous progress. If you wish us to follow the example of England, I say yes, with all my heart, but her real example and nothing less. Let us keep protection, as she did, until no rival dares to invade our territory, and then we may take our chances for a future which by that time will not be unknown. . . .

Where he [Lincoln] failed we cannot hope to succeed. But though we fail here to-day like our great leader of other days, in the larger field before the mightier tribunal which will finally and forever decide this question we shall be more than

conquerors; for this great nation, shaking off as it has once before the influence of a lower civilization, will go on to fulfill its high destiny until over the South, as well as over the North, shall be spread the full measure of that amazing prosperity which is the wonder of the world. [*Prolonged applause on the floor and in the galleries.*]

The bill was carried in the House with slightly less than the usual Democratic majority, but it was destined to have a rough passage before it finally became a law. The Senate grafted upon it six hundred or more amendments, some of which were radical in their character. When the bill came back to the House for action on these amendments, there was much brave talk against the mutilation of the bill. On July 19, 1894, a drastic rule was proposed with reference to the conference. Reed felt sure that with all this display of bravery the House in the end would yield to the Senate and he turned his batteries of ridicule upon the conference. The proposed rule, he said, would present the House to the Senate as solid, and that would be liable to be misleading.

Your committee needs all the factitious support that they can possibly get and that is another reason why you should adopt this rule because it is in your power and you want to hold up the hands of the brethren — which are not very strong [*laughter*] — and make them vigorous, because they are contending, not with idealists, not with individuals with a theory, but with individuals who have definite purposes, definite aims, definite motives; gentlemen who know precisely on which side their provisions are buttered. [*Laughter and applause.*] . . . The gentleman from Ohio has paid a touching tribute to the stern persistence of the conferees on the part of the House on this bill — their heroism is

dragged before the public for the first time — I hope the gentleman from Ohio, in his reserved time or in mine, will tell us just how long this courage is to last. [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] What does "courage" mean or what does it amount to when it backs down as soon as the time comes? [*Laughter.*] What does courage that lasts only a week amount to, when it is the courage of two weeks that does the business?

After the adoption of the rule Mr. Wilson made an eloquent speech full of defiance to the Senate and caused to be read the famous letter to himself from the President. The reading of the letter was frequently interrupted with loud cheers from the Democratic members, and especially the passage which denounced the abandonment of their tariff platform as "party perfidy and party dishonor." Reed in reply took occasion again to call attention to the passing display of courage. The gentleman from West Virginia, he said, "amid the uproarious applause of the other side, has pledged this House of Representatives to stand out against the Senate." He drew out the admission from Wilson that although the President's letter was marked "personal," he had consented to have it made public.

The President has been pleased [*Reed said*] to address a communication to the House of Representatives through his faithful Committee of Ways and Means. Whether this relationship thus intimate between a committee of this House and the President was contemplated by the Constitution of the United States or not, is hardly worth the trouble of inquiry. Least of all would anybody on this side find fault with the severe language which the President — the Democratic President — has seen fit to use about a Democratic Senate. [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*]

The House without a division voted to sustain Wilson and his colleagues in their battle with the Senate.

But the end of the "courage," which Reed foresaw, came to pass. After some weeks more spent in conference it was given out that a Democratic senator proposed to make a motion to terminate the conference which would mean the end of the bill. Thereupon the Democratic leaders of the House adopted the programme that the House should recede and concur in the six hundred or more Senate amendments by a single vote. In addition it was proposed that the House should consider as separate propositions, bills putting on the free list sugar, coal, iron, and barbed wire, and vote upon them after an hour's debate upon each. The adoption of this programme meant the passage into law of the Wilson bill with all the Senate amendments, and an attempt to disguise the proceeding by a demonstration upon the free-list bills, which could by no possibility pass the Senate and become laws.

This outcome of the "courage" which Reed had emphasized a few weeks previously gave him a supreme opportunity, and he never used his power of ridicule more effectively than on the day when the programme came before the House.

The first proposition you are called upon to vote [*he said*] is that you will take action upon papers that are not before you, that you will violate the principles of parliamentary law in order to do a thing which you yourselves have proclaimed to be disgusting. You are going to trample upon the barriers which preserve the rights of the people of this country, in order to perform an act which would be distasteful to

gentlemen who were differently constituted from yourselves. [*Laughter on the Republican side.*] You are going to do it in defiance of all your protestations, in defiance of all your declarations! You are going to die, not only in the last ditch, but in the very lowest part of the ditch. [*Laughter on the Republican side.*] You are going to enact a bill which you believe not to be an honest bill, and you are going to accompany it with a parade, which you also know is not honest. You are going to desert the "roll of honor" [*laughter*] in order to trick yourselves out with the gewgaws that are contained in this proposition. You are going to give us free sugar. — Yes, in your minds. [*Laughter.*] You are going to give us free coal. — Oh, my friends! And then you are going to give us free iron, and you are going to do it in a bold and manly way, like the backdown you are making here. [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] You are going to have no committee of this House, not even your own pliant committee, to stand between you and the noble purpose that thrills your souls. [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] Now how do you like the whole programme? You are going to vote it; say how you like it.

A voice on the Democratic side replied amid laughter, "First-rate." Reed retorted, "Providence loves a cheerful devourer." [*Laughter.*]

Wilson made a speech, composed in large part of a denunciation of trusts and monopolies, and closed with a reference to the bill presented to put sugar on the free list, which, however, could not become a law.

Reed in reply expressed regret for the position of his antagonists.

So far as the gentleman from West Virginia is concerned and his compatriots, there is not the slightest necessity of my commenting on the difference between this scene of sorrow, and the triumphal procession which carried him out of this

House. [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] He is not so joyous now, having been carried out in another branch, and more effectually. [*Renewed laughter.*] Our conferees came back to us, gentlemen of the House, without so much as the name of the bill that they transported across this building a month ago. It will be known in history as the "Gorman-Brice bill, *vice* the Wilson bill dead." [*Laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] Aye, dead on the field of "dishonor." [*Renewed laughter and applause.*] The gentleman from West Virginia and his compatriots appear before us now, not as the triumphal reformers, marching to glory at the sound of their own sweet voices. They are little babes in the wood, and it will be found pretty soon that they were left there by their "uncle" in the White House. [*Great laughter and applause on the Republican side.*] And I can hear the coming sound of the pinions of the little birds, bearing the ballots that are to bury them out of sight. [*Laughter on the Republican side.*] We shall not write your epitaph. That has been done by a nearer and a dearer. That has been done by the man whose name must be affixed to this bill before it can discredit the statute books. His name must be to it.[1] We have a proposition to fire one of those pop-gun tariff bills for which the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Springer) was deposed from the Committee on Ways and Means. [*Laughter on Republican side.*] His successor, after filling the atmosphere with his outspread wings, finds his nest in some other bird's premises. [*Laughter on the Republican side.*] Why not resign if you were to adopt the action of the other person. I congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Springer) upon his personal triumph.

And so it continued throughout the day. Never was a retreat made more disastrous. Never was a subterfuge more mercilessly torn to pieces than that of the four little tariff bills which were designed to cover the

[1] President Cleveland refused to sign the bill, and in default of his signature it became a law ten days after it had been submitted to him.

retreat. When the last of these bills was reached for consideration, Reed said: —

> This is the last of the air-cushions which the statesmen of this little kingdom of Lilliput, in which we are now living, have arranged for themselves to tumble on this evening. Of course it is a cushion that is filled with air like the rest — not wind, because wind is air in motion; this is air that has gone to rest. [*Laughter.*]

Shortly after the passage of the bill, the campaign opened for the election of members of the House. Reed was the most sought man in his party, and his part in the campaign was conspicuous. The result was an overwhelming rout for the Democracy. The majority of 90 which they had in the House was transformed into a Republican majority of 145, the greatest change between two successive elections that had ever been witnessed in the history of the House. The representation from most of the Southern states, on account of the race issue, and from the Tammany districts in New York City, was too securely attached to the Democratic party to be lost even in a revolution. But almost every other seat in the country was taken by the Republicans. The result meant the return of Reed to the Speakership by an enormous majority.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE QUORUM RULING VINDICATED — THE MORGAN GOLD CONTRACT

THERE remain some portions of the work of this Congress to which reference should be made. The old controversy over the rules steadily recurred, and Reed was pretty apt to have a word upon it. One day the question of the quorum came under discussion, and in a reply to a speech by Springer Reed said: —

> When I find the gentleman from Illinois and the Supreme Court of the United States in opposition, of course it would be a very puzzling matter to me if I did not have some convictions of my own. [*Laughter.*] I am sorry that the gentleman cannot seem to understand the matters involved in these discussions. I am exceedingly sorry that the Democratic party cannot understand them, and I realize the truth of the old proverb that a match for the very gods is lack of knowledge — to put it in no harsher fashion. [*Laughter.*]

He favored a rule which would prevent one man from taking all the time of the House under the pretext of "freedom of debate." A limitation was necessary in the interest of that very freedom. Reed favored what he called the previous question of the fathers. "While I am not violently in love with a thing because our fathers were for it, I can use the argument when I am appealing to a set of gentlemen who are fond of

the action of our fathers." [*Laughter.*] He declared that the House should have restored to itself the power that had been taken away

by a few filibusters — filibuster being a Spanish name for a land pirate. [*Laughter.*] Let us not confuse honest debate with that miserable bastard business by which one man stands here and sets up his will against the will of all of us. I know and so do you that we are all the embodiment of absolute wisdom [*laughter*], but this is a world on which we have got to live and let live; and it may happen even to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Kilgore), that on some occasion the wisdom of three hundred and fifty-five other gentlemen may be on a par with his or possibly just a little shade better. [*Laughter.*]

A danger to be guarded against in framing a rule was that men would often give it an unreasonable application. It was a saying of his that "men never remain reasonably bad. They carry their badness to excess and therefore to correction." It was his contention that the House should retain control of debate, so that when it was abused and indulged in for purposes of delay, the House itself could act upon the situation and close debate in such a case if it saw fit to do so.

It was during the second session of this Congress that his antagonists were forced to adopt the principle of the present, instead of the voting, quorum which he had enunciated in his famous ruling when Speaker. There came a time when the Democrats, although they had a majority of ninety, were unable to maintain a quorum out of their own numbers. The situation was ornamented with the usual long succession of fruitless roll-calls. Under Reed's lead the fight was desperately

waged. The Republicans refrained from voting on motions and other matters of business. There was furnished an illustration of the truth of the aphorism implied in a question put by Reed during the preceding Congress: "Do you not see that if the House gives permission for piracy some gentleman may choose to go into that interesting and lucrative business?" Reed proceeded to reduce the Democratic theory of a quorum to an absurdity. The business of the House was at a complete standstill for many days, and finally, after many messages to absent members, the majority surrendered, and on April 17, 1894, a rule was adopted providing that tellers should note enough names of members present and not answering on a roll-call to make a quorum, and that such members should be counted as present in order to make a quorum.

Partisanship had done its worst in the bitterness with which it had assailed Reed for his ruling upon the quorum. He might have been pardoned a word of triumph. But he was too large a man to indulge in it. He made a brief and simple speech on the proposed rule in which there was not the least glorification.

> This scene here to-day [*he said*] is a more effective address than any I could make. The House is about to adopt the principle for which we contended in the Fifty-first Congress and is about to adopt it under circumstances which show conclusively to the country its value. No words that I can utter can add to the importance of the occasion. I congratulate the Fifty-third Congress on the wise decision it is about to make.

The rule was adopted by a vote of 213 to 47, and thus

was brought to an end the most historic controversy in the development of the law of the House.

During January, 1895, the condition of the Treasury became desperate. The gold reserve would have been very narrow even in normal times to maintain the stability of our monetary standard, but there was a great deficit in our revenues which intensified the difficulty. This deficiency had exceeded a hundred million in less than two years. When greenbacks or treasury notes had been redeemed in gold, the necessities of the government would require their use in paying its running expenses. And when paid out they would again be presented for redemption in gold. An income tax had been provided, but at the outset its constitutionality appeared very doubtful, and it was finally overturned by a decision of the Supreme Court; but even this tax, if it had been upheld, would have been insufficient to meet the emergency. An important fault in the conduct of the Treasury at that time consisted in the failure to provide a sufficient revenue, which might easily have been obtained by the temporary imposition of stamp taxes.

In default of sufficient revenue, Reed himself introduced a bill to keep the balance of receipts and expenditures separate from the redemption account of the Treasury; and for a separate issue of bonds to maintain the validity of each account. The majority, however, refused to accept his bill and adopted another policy which was subjected to much criticism. In order to procure a supply of gold the administration made a

contract with J. P. Morgan and Company for the sale of some sixty-five millions of four per cents, at a premium much smaller than that which similar bonds usually commanded. These bonds, like the other bonds of the government, were payable in coin. There was a provision in the contract that Morgan and Company would accept three per cents at par on condition that they contained a provision making them payable in gold. In order to issue such an exceptional bond it was necessary to secure action by Congress, and Wilson brought forward a bill to sanction the issue. Reed was willing to give his full support to any proceeding which the administration believed necessary in its effort to maintain the gold standard, but he gravely doubted the wisdom of having a small issue of bonds different from all the other bonds of the government and thus to some extent discrediting them. He reluctantly voted for the bill, which failed to pass the House. His desire to amend the bill drew out a letter from a banker who severely criticised Reed, but upon somewhat narrow grounds. The following quotations are from Reed's reply to this letter:—

WASHINGTON, D.C., *Feb.* 11, 1895.

MY DEAR SIR: —

You seem to be a member of a respectable firm of bankers and say you are a Republican. Would it not be wiser for you to suspect me of patriotism than of ambition? I have explained at full length my reasons for action in a speech which I enclose. I desire to add that Mr. Hendricks, a banker from Brooklyn, and I had agreed upon my substitute, with an amendment to which Mr. Springer had assented, and the

same would have passed at once but the Administration forbade. Had that passed, it might have gone through the Senate and could have done some good. If you will read an article in the Boston "Herald," Saturday, February ninth, you will see a true statement of those 3¾ per cent bonds. If you desire to approve of such a trade, you may do so, — I do not.

If you are really a Republican, why should you think ill of your own friends in order to think well of the pilots who have put us on these rocks? When you see these bonds at their proper premium you will see what has been done. As the "Herald" says: "We protest that the valuation of our credit involved in the President's arrangement is not a true one. If the bonds had been sold in open competition they would unquestionably have brought a much better figure. But here there was, so far as is known, no competition. The President appears to have put himself into the hands of a syndicate of foreign and native bankers, and his chief aim in the negotiation would seem to have been to make the difference between gold bonds and coin bonds as large as possible, with the view of giving an impressive object-lesson to Congress. The lesson is obviously cooked up, and the cooking has been done at the expense of American taxpayers."

Now the "Herald" is "Gold," "Mugwump," and everything except Republican. Is John Sherman advising this action? I happen to know that he is not. On the contrary, I submitted my proposition to him and he fully approved it as the only practical one.

Is Mr. Carlisle a sounder financier than Mr. Sherman?

Very truly yours,

T. B. Reed.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECOND SPEAKERSHIP

The Fifty-fourth Congress assembled on December 2, 1895, and Reed was chosen Speaker of the House, receiving 240 votes to 95 for Crisp, — a very ample majority compared with that which he had led in his previous Speakership. He was not merely the leader of the House, but, since the President was a Democrat, he was the official head of his party in the country. It is doubtful if he ever took more satisfaction in public life than during the first session of this Congress. Out of the vituperation and calumny of his first Speakership and the hard and continuous fighting as minority leader in the next two Congresses, he had emerged into smooth water, with an enormous majority behind him, vindicated by the country and vindicated too by his political opponents in that part of his official conduct which they had most violently assailed.

He took a placid enjoyment in presiding over the House, and his manner was much like that of a benevolent teacher. The philosophy and often the humor of his rulings helped make the House thoroughly good-natured. On assuming the Chair he said that it would not be unbecoming if he acknowledged that it was very agreeable for him

to stand once more in the place which I left four years ago. . . . Nor shall I now speak of the future, for we are not now putting off the harness but putting it on. Yet I think I may venture to say of the future, in the light of the past, that if we do some things which for the moment seem inadequate, it may be that time, which has justified itself of us on many occasions, may do so again.

There was very little to do in the way of party legislation because the chronic political difference between the House and the Executive was again witnessed. But the forward movement of events developed questions which could not be settled by the maintenance of the old party alignments. As in the preceding Congress, Reed generally supported the President in matters which were not clearly partisan. It may fairly be assumed that he approved of the legislation desired by the President and speedily passed by a House so strongly Republican and led by himself.

The Venezuela boundary controversy was the most important subject brought forward and acted upon at the request of the President. In the boundary dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela, our government had proposed that the question be submitted to arbitration. Great Britain declined to act according to the suggestion. President Cleveland thereupon sent to Congress his famous message in which he urged that the attitude of Great Britain threatened the Monroe Doctrine. He argued that if a European country extended its boundaries and took possession of the territory of an American country against its will, "it is difficult to see why to that extent such European

power does not thereby attempt to extend its system of government to that portion of this continent which is thus taken. This is the precise action which President Monroe declared to be 'dangerous to our peace and safety.'" He asked Congress to appropriate money for a commission to be appointed by the President which should investigate and report upon the boundary in dispute between the two countries, and when such a report had been made and accepted, the President declared, with more bluntness than diplomacy, that it would in his opinion "be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power, as a willful aggression upon its rights and interests," the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands which the Commission had determined to belong to Venezuela.

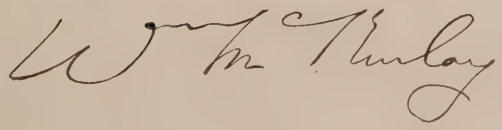
This recommendation was sufficiently heroic. It was, perhaps, a fair application of the Monroe Doctrine, even if a somewhat ill-mannered one. There seemed no other course open to Congress than to make an appropriation for the commission. The Committee on Foreign Affairs had not yet been announced, but Hitt of Illinois was certain to be its chairman, and Reed accorded recognition to him to offer the resolution. It passed the House without opposition. Direct as this proceeding was, it could have given no offense to Great Britain. But the conclusion of the message was more undiplomatic and even warlike in tone. "In making these recommendations," the President proceeded, "I am fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may fol-

low." There was an even more direct hint at war in the concluding paragraph. As William James put it, "The President's fearful blunder was in coupling his direct threat of war with his demand for a commission." [1]

Except for the affair with Mexico, Great Britain was the only foreign nation with which we had ever been at war; and in those good old days, which culminated and, let us hope, came to an end in the Venezuela incident, a "war scare" with Great Britain was quite the proper thing with which to fire the national heart. And a "war scare" speedily appeared. The world proceeded with enthusiasm to sell securities in our great international market in New York, and stocks tumbled in a sensational way. While we had vast wealth, seventy million people, great moral power, and all the other subjects for fine political speaking, — what was more to the point at the moment, our harbors were undefended and we were without ships. However worthy the nation might be, it was hardly an opportune time for it to fly into a rage against the most formidably armed nation in the world so far as the geographical isolation of the United States was concerned. The British statesmen, however, showed much good sense and the difference was amicably adjusted.

During the winter of 1895–96 the canvass for the Republican presidential nomination became very active. Reed's fitness and availability as a candidate

[1] See letter of William James to the author, *Congressional Record*, Dec. 28, 1895.



were very widely recognized. The tariff was to be an important issue, and he had made clear his position upon that issue in many hard-fought battles. The money question was sure to come forward, although it was not foreseen in the preliminary campaign that it was to be the paramount issue. His record upon that question made him conspicuously the one man in his party to be nominated.

On the tariff he was at a disadvantage in the contest with McKinley. The Republican tariff which had been enacted in 1890 bore the name of the latter. "McKinleyism" became the campaign epithet which was scornfully flung at the Republicans, and was made to do effective service in the congressional elections of 1890, and in the presidential election two years afterwards. It represented the overshadowing issue then in the public mind. If ever anything had appeared to be repudiated at the polls it was "McKinleyism," and in the popular mind the order which came in under Mr. Cleveland represented not so much an affirmative issue of its own as anti-McKinleyism.

The country signally failed to prosper under Mr. Cleveland, and there was a violent revulsion of popular sentiment. The pendulum swung back to the opposite extreme and the thing that had just been an epithet became a watchword. McKinleyism became at the moment as popular as it had before been unpopular, and it made a more definite and effective appeal than all the remarkable work Reed had done against the Mills bill and the Wilson bill and in favor of pro-

tection measures. When therefore Reed defeated McKinley for the Speakership and appointed him, as his leading antagonist, to the chairmanship of Ways and Means, he placed him in a position which at first won him much odium and unpopularity but which in the end was to furnish him, not indeed with his strongest reason, but with his most effective appeal for the nomination. It is hardly putting it too strongly to say that the vote in the caucus of the Republicans of the House which defeated McKinley for the Speakership made him President.

But the canvass was destined in its first stages to be very exciting. Mr. Mark Hanna made his first conspicuous appearance in politics as the manager of the McKinley campaign. Probably no man who ever lived in America had a greater influence with what are called "the interests," and in those days "the interests" had tremendous power. Mr. James F. Aldrich, a member of Congress from Illinois, was the manager for Reed. The first serious setback that the Reed forces received was in the Southern states. Those states cast no electoral votes for the Republican candidates, but they had as full a representation in the National Convention, on the basis of population, as the strongest Republican states. Securing delegates was largely a matter of dicker with the local "machines" and with so-called leaders. The McKinley managers made copious hauls of delegates from the South.

About this feature of the campaign Reed used afterwards to speak with a good deal of bitterness. He be-

lieved that the use of money played an important part in securing the Southern delegates. But his friends continued to make a stout fight. Public meetings were held in support of his candidacy in different parts of the country. Perhaps the most important of these meetings was that held in Boston where a great audience listened to speeches by William Alden Smith and Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a warm personal friend of Reed and his enthusiastic supporter. The friendship between the two men began ten years or more before 1896, near the opening of Roosevelt's public career, and continued through the remainder of Reed's life. They were not in agreement on the important questions related to the war with Spain but, notwithstanding that, they remained friends.

Reed's state and Massachusetts and Rhode Island endorsed him very strongly, and elected delegates in his favor. New Hampshire commended both Reed and McKinley, but chose delegates friendly to the former. Connecticut also was in favor of Reed, but with some division among the delegates. His candidacy received a disastrous blow in Vermont. New England had been confidently relied upon, but Vermont broke the solidity of that section by declaring for McKinley. The defection of that state, the inroads upon the Southern delegates, and the carrying of Illinois by McKinley, gave such an impetus to the forces of the latter, that when the Convention assembled in June, it was clearly apparent that he would be chosen on the first ballot.

The member of the National Committee from Maine, Mr. Joseph H. Manley, was in charge of Reed's interests at the Convention, and in the week preceding the meeting of the delegates he made a statement that "the vote in the National Committee this afternoon was so overwhelmingly for Governor McKinley that it settles his nomination on the first ballot." Naturally this produced consternation among the friends of Reed, who were ready to keep up the fight until the vote in the convention proved that they were beaten. The Reed newspapers censured Manley with some asperity. The fact seemed to be that Manley was depressed by the result of the decision of the National Committee concerning the contested delegations, and expressed himself with a great deal of frankness as well as with truth. He regretted his frankness, however, as is shown by the following from a letter he wrote to Reed: —

St. Louis, *June* 12, 1896.

My dear Mr. Reed: —

I am in receipt of your letter. I did make the statement attributed to me. It was a great mistake and I shall regret it all my life. I was so surprised at the action of the Committee and the open announcement that they were to practically seat all the McKinley contestants — have the Committee on Credentials adopt the National Committee's report — both chairmen of the Convention, that I felt it was all over and everyone in the Country I thought would so understand it. I have never been disloyal in thought, word, or deed to you. What more can I say? I have suffered more than you can ever know because of my mistake. . . .

The Convention met at St. Louis on June 16, 1896, and on June 18 the nominations were made. Reed's

name was presented in brilliant speeches by Senator Lodge of Massachusetts and by Mr. Charles E. Littlefield, one of the delegates-at-large from Maine. The result was a foregone conclusion, and for that reason all the wavering delegates, and those who were not firmly pledged to other candidates and wished to ally themselves with the sure winner, voted for McKinley, who was nominated on the first ballot. Reed received 83½ votes. If all the delegates had acted according to their real opinions and the opinions of their constituents, he would certainly have received a very much larger vote.

The determining factor in the choice of delegates had been the tariff, but that was not to be the foremost issue in the campaign. The money question was destined to displace the tariff, largely on account of the radical action of the Democratic Convention, which assembled later at Chicago, and which responded to Mr. Bryan's "crown of thorns and cross of gold" speech by making him its nominee. Fortunately for the party and the country, the friends of Reed had a strong if not determining influence in securing the adoption by the Republican convention of a money plank firmly pledging the party to the gold standard.

The campaign which followed was conspicuous among all the campaigns that have ever been waged in the country, for the reason that a clear-cut issue was presented to the voters. There was practically no evasion. The question was whether we should have the gold standard, or the free coinage of both gold and

silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, which meant the silver standard. For obviously the free coinage of both metals at that ratio when their relative bullion value was as 32 to 1, could have had no other result than to banish gold from circulation and from the coinage. Reed was the one man in practical politics and prominent in his party who was fitted to lead upon that issue.

He had some thought of retiring from politics, but the suddenness with which the money issue had been thrust upon the country, and its great importance, caused him to decide to stand for reëlection to the House. The following from a letter to Mr. Dalzell reveals his attitude.

GRAND BEACH, ME., 1 *Aug.* '96.

DEAR DALZELL: —

Thanks for your telegram which reached me after a wandering. But is n't it a lovely situation! Of course we shall beat them, but what a task it seems likely to be. Let me know how things are in N.J. & Pa., and what you hear from any of our fellows in the West. My people wanted me to be up again and things were so mixed here that I felt I must.

One can't help a sense of disgust over some things, but there are issues at stake which are too important for anybody's mere personal notions. In fact politics is mostly pill-taking. . . .

Be a good man, my dear, and you will be rewarded in Heaven — a good place if it materializes for any of us but Dingley.

Yours

T. B. R.

Having determined to continue in politics, he took a leading part in the campaign, beginning his speaking in Maine and concluding on the Pacific coast. He was

renominated July 29, 1896, and the speech which he made on that occasion was widely printed throughout the country.

Two months ago [*he said*] no man of any standing would have risked his reputation as a prophet by hinting the slightest doubt of Republican success. Four years of actual trial of the opposition, under the guidance of its best and twice-trusted leader, had left no shadow of question as to public duty. However far the Republican party might have fallen short of perfection, nevertheless all men felt that it was the best party just now to draw nigh to for whatever is to be left to us of sound government, commercial success, and business prosperity.

Two months have slipped away — hardly time to ripen a strawberry, much less a system of finance — and there are those who tell us that all things have changed, that those very men who were being arrayed for decent burial have burst the cerements of the grave, and, transfigured by some new arrangement of crowns of thorns and crosses of gold, are to lead us to a new happiness, and even repair all damage they themselves have wrought.

Now, this may be so, but to me it does not seem probable. Human experience in every walk of life teaches us that those who have blundered will blunder again, and that the wisest course is not to employ a ship captain who has not yet emerged from his last shipwreck, but the safe sailor who has never lost a ship, passenger, or a letter, but who has sailed safe through every sea. He may have lost mast and sail, and even been rudderless for hours, but if he has every time come safe to shore, better have him than all the landsmen who are forever shouting what they can do, and never dare to tell of what they have done. Boasters are worth nothing. Deeds are facts and are forever and ever. Talk dies on the empty air. Better a pound of performance than a shipload of language.

But is it wise or just to call all Democrats together, and to declare them all wrong, then announce they must be beaten

because they are Democrats? That would be very unwise, very unjust, and senseless altogether. It would flout all history, and especially their own. Parties are one thing, their individual members may be another. Parties seldom follow their best men. They follow their average sense. In real action there can be but two parties, the creating party and the retarding party. The progressive party may be unwise in its progress, and the retarding party may be unwise in its conservatism, but both serve a good purpose, and between them both the world slowly and safely moves ahead. Dreadfully slowly sometimes, but it does always move ahead.

The speech from which the preceding brief extracts are taken was received with approbation by Republicans throughout the country. The newspapers reprinted it widely, and made it the subject of favorable comment. Among the letters that came to Reed was the following: —

July 31, 1896.

Dear Tom: — Your speech was magnificent. You struck the keynote exactly. We must not in any way ignore the tariff; but we must put our main effort on finance.

Oh, Lord! what would I not give if only you were our standard-bearer; and, as that is impossible, if only the managers would follow on the lines that you have pointed out.

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Roosevelt.

Hon. Thomas B. Reed,
Pine Point, Me.

Probably the country was never before so thoroughly canvassed as in the campaign of 1896. From the one ocean to the other there was scarcely a village that did not have its political rallies on both sides, and in the great cities and larger towns there was a steady succession of meetings during the month and a half pre-

ceding the election. The result of this extraordinary activity was an enormous vote, probably much the largest on the basis of population that has ever been cast in the country. Bryan was decisively defeated on the electoral vote, and still more decisively on the popular vote; but at no election either before or since 1896 has his party, whether victorious or defeated, polled so large a vote as was cast for him. The result of the election was to give the Republicans not only the Presidency but the control of both Houses of Congress, and therefore to confer upon them the undivided responsibility for the government of the country.

During the second period of Reed's Speakership there was a Congressional excursion to Monticello. That excursion has no importance here except for the following fragment in Reed's handwriting relating an incident of the trip to which Senator Hoar was a party. It may be said in explanation that when these two men met socially each was pretty apt to have his say about the House to which the other belonged.

Was chaffing Brother Hoar about the Senate, much to the delight of Mrs. Hoar, when the Senator said: —

"Mr. Speaker, have you read the new edition of Æsop's 'Fables,' recently translated out of the original Greek?"

"No," said the Speaker, "I have not seen it."

"Well," said the Senator, "there is a fable there which reads like this: Once there was a lunatic asylum with a keeper —"

Said the Speaker, interrupting, "Oh, I know how original that Greek is, and I think I could name the translator."

"Well," said Hoar, "once there was a lunatic asylum with a keeper, and one of the inmates proposed a resolution that

they should all take off their strait-jackets. Then they all rose, each one reaching for his jacket, but seeing all the others do the same, each one realized the damage likely to ensue, sat down, and all unanimously voted against the resolution. Then the keeper pointed out to the country how perfectly free these people were."

"But," said the Speaker sweetly, "you have forgotten the moral. Let me translate it out of still more original Greek. '*Moral.* This teaches that a lunatic asylum with a keeper is much better than a Senate without.'"

CHAPTER XX

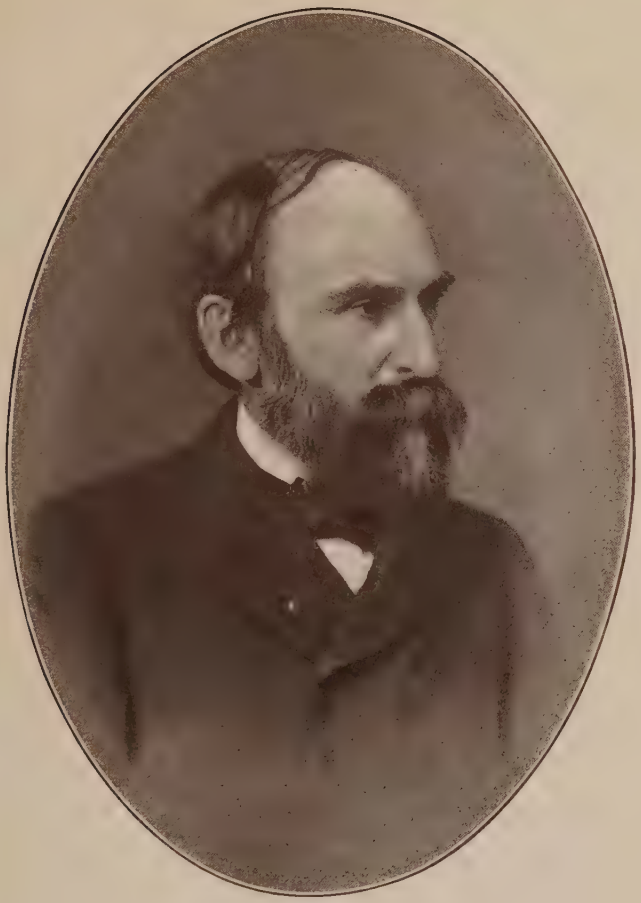
WAR — THE PHILIPPINES

With the inauguration of McKinley there came to an end that balanced condition of the parties which had existed since the first Congress of Grant's second term. Only for six years of that interval had the President and both Houses been in accord politically, and at no time was the agreement much stronger than nominal. The party majority was so slender in the one House or the other, and sometimes in both, that no administration ever had a really free hand. But the Republican majority in the first Congress under McKinley was not merely ample — it was so large as to invite extreme party legislation. Events however were destined to shape themselves so that after the first session of this Congress new issues came forward and party lines were for the time obliterated.

Almost immediately after his inauguration the President called the Congress together in extraordinary session to revise the tariff. Reed was again chosen Speaker, receiving 200 votes against 114 for Joseph W. Bailey of Texas. That the President and Congress were fully in accord on the tariff was at once shown. On the opening day Dingley introduced a tariff bill, amid the applause of his side, and a Committee on Ways and Means was at once appointed to consider

it. Three days later he reported the bill back to the House, and in July it had finally passed both Houses and become a law. The bill was an expression of the extreme reaction from the Democratic tariff which preceded it. The average of duties on dutiable goods was lower than that of the McKinley law, but under the broader and fairer test there was little difference between the two measures in the average duty on all goods coming into the country, both dutiable and free. It would doubtless have been better party policy and would have injured no interest if the range of duties had been made lower. With the details of the measure Reed had nothing to do and he probably knew nothing about them, but undoubtedly he fully indorsed the protective character of the bill.

But the routine of the work of this Congress was destined to be broken by an event which startled the whole world. The rebellion in the Island of Cuba against the authority of Spain had been proceeding with varying fortunes. It had at last been checked and appeared to be approaching the point of suppression. The United States battleship Maine, doubtless for some friendly purpose, had been sent to Havana. During the night of February 15, 1898, while lying at anchor in the harbor of that city, the ship was suddenly blown up by some agency of extraordinary force. The country was at once stirred from one end to the other. The conclusion most commonly assumed was that the ship had been blown up by Spaniards, and that Spain was responsible for the deed. In fact this conclusion was



Nelson Dingley Jr.

gravely stated in speeches in Congress. The popular impulse was to rush into war. The administration at once ordered an inquiry by a board of naval officers, and asked for a suspension of judgment. This was commendable, but as another power was vitally concerned, it would have been better to go further and admit her under proper conditions to participate in the investigation or at least to be represented. The Board of Inquiry reported that the destruction of the ship had been caused by an external explosion and this report was speedily followed by legislation that made war inevitable.

Reed was firmly against war. While he was not a "peace-at-any-price" statesman, he was profoundly impressed with the barbarism of war and its antagonism to the spirit of the age. He knew also that although war might settle the issue over which it was waged it was liable to leave new and more difficult problems in its train. He exerted his personal influence with members to the breaking-point and helped delay the outbreak. And after a resolution had passed the one House and had been amended by the other, he used his power of appointment to select conservative conferees on the part of the House.

To do the President justice, he was also opposed to war. Even after he knew the contents of the report of the naval board he summoned members of both Houses to the White House and urged them to stay action. At the last his message to Congress recommended a course which would have left the question open for

diplomatic negotiation. He angered some of the extreme advocates of war who denounced him in the cloak rooms and lobbies of the Capitol for his last efforts to maintain peace. The spectators would troop from the galleries of one chamber to those of the other as the conference report passed to and fro between the Houses and as the one House or the other thus became the centre of interest. After an exciting session running far into the night the report of the conference was finally agreed to in both Houses, and an ultimatum was directed against Spain which she could not accept and which made war a certainty. The final vote in the House was 311 in favor of the report to 6 against it.

Three days later, when the first practical war measure was brought before the House, in the shape of a resolution to prohibit the export of coal or other war material, Reed called to the Chair one of the six members who had voted against the conference report and as he passed the gavel to him, said: "I envy you the luxury of your vote. I was where I could not do it."

After the country was at war Reed supported the measures necessary to its prosecution. When however it was proposed to annex the Sandwich Islands as a war measure he refused to follow. The naval power of Spain in the Philippines had been completely destroyed, and it appeared no more necessary to annex Hawaii in order to conquer Spain or to promote the purposes for which we went to war, than it was to an-

nex the moon. There were powerful interests in the United States that were very willing to make the war a pretext for annexation. The production of sugar was an important industry in Hawaii, and the plantations were largely owned in the United States. There could be no more certain road to wealth than to produce sugar on tropical soil and with tropical labor, and to be permitted to sell it free of all duty in a great market made artificially high by a tariff levied against all other foreign sugars. The annexation of the islands meant the perpetual admission of their sugar free into the United States in place of the temporary arrangement which had been adopted to that end. Then, too, without regard to the war with Spain, there was a powerful party in the United States in favor of acquiring oversea territory in order to extend the boundaries of the country.

One of the foundation principles of Reed's political belief was the right of self-government in communities. It was not seriously proposed that the islands should be admitted as a state into the American Union, to participate, at some time in the future, in the common government of all; and their status therefore would be that of a vassal nation subject to the sovereignty and control of the imperial state. Reed took the Declaration of Independence very seriously. Many years before the annexation was proposed, he had said in a speech in the House that "the best government of which a people is capable is a government which they establish for themselves. With all its imperfections,

with all its shortcomings, it is always better adapted to them than any other government, even though invented by wiser men!" He was therefore opposed to annexation, whether the Sandwich Islands only were considered, or whether the proceeding was to be the entering wedge for a more distant and daring application of imperialism.

The resolution to annex Hawaii was brought forward in the House after repeated attempts to consider it had failed. Reed would exercise no discretion which he had under the rules to give recognition to a motion to call up the resolution. Finally it acquired the right of way under the rules and came before the House. It was not the custom for the Speaker to vote. Reed was at home ill when the vote was taken. For the two-fold reason therefore of custom and absence, there was no necessity for his position to be announced. But the Speaker pro tempore, Mr. Dalzell, at Reed's request announced to the House that if the Speaker were present he would vote nay. It is doubtful if such a course had ever before been taken by a Speaker.

In the summer of 1898 Reed stood for election to the House for the twelfth time, and received the great majority that he had become accustomed to receive during the last half-dozen elections at which he was a candidate. But the difference between him and the administration became more serious, as the result of an issue which the war had brought forward. The war with Spain had proved a most unequal contest, because of the vast difference between the resources of

the two nations. In the treaty of peace we purchased the Philippines and thereby purchased a war which proved much more deadly than that which the treaty had brought to an end. The Philippines were in rebellion against Spain just as Cuba had been. The United States went to war for the avowed purpose of securing the independence of Cuba. The latter country was within the traditional radius of our political action, and from her nearness and her relation to the American people they were deeply interested in her welfare. On the other hand, probably not one person out of ten of the population of the United States had ever heard of the Philippines before the outbreak of the war. They were situated in the hemisphere in whose affairs it was our traditional policy not to interfere. They were on the farther side of the greatest ocean in the world, and their acquirement would destroy the invulnerability established by our two ocean bulwarks and profoundly affect our military problem. We had made ourselves their allies in their war for independence, and had taken their leader from Hong Kong to Manila on our fleet. Could we therefore purchase and assert a title against which we had encouraged them in rebellion? Reed profoundly disbelieved in the existence of a colonial theory of our Constitution, or in making an application of such a theory to the Philippines by taking on the "last colonial curse of Spain."

When therefore the islands had been acquired from Spain by treaty made by the President with the advice

and consent of the Senate, and war had been entered upon for the purpose of subjugating their inhabitants to our control, he determined to retire from public life. He said to his trusted friend and secretary, Asher C. Hinds, "I have tried, perhaps not always successfully, to make the acts of my public life accord with my conscience, and I cannot now do this thing." He had been elected to the succeeding Congress and was certain to be chosen again to the Speakership, an office of which he once said that it had but one superior and no peer. But he put forth a brief address to the Republicans of his district announcing his retirement.

While I am naturally repugnant [*he said*] to obtrude myself again upon public attention even here at home, I am sure no one would expect me to leave the First Maine District after so long a service without some word expressing to you my appreciation of your friendship and my gratitude for your generous treatment. Words alone are quite inadequate and I must appeal to your memories. During three and twenty years of political life not always peaceful, you have never questioned one single public act of mine. Other men have had to look after their districts, but my district has always looked after me. This, in the land where I was born, and where you know my shortcomings as well as I do myself, gives me a right to be proud of my relations with you. No honors are ever quite like those which come from home. It would not be just for me not to add also my thanks to those Democrats who have so often given me their help. This I can do even in a letter to Republicans, for they and you know that no sail has been trimmed for any breeze nor any doubtful flag ever flown.

Office as a "ribbon to stick in your coat" is worth nobody's consideration. Office as opportunity is worth all consideration. That opportunity you have given me, untrammeled, in the fullest and amplest manner, and I return you

sincerest thanks. If I have deserved any praise it belongs of right to you.

Whatever may happen I am sure the First Maine District will always be true to the principles of liberty, self-government, and the rights of man.

CHAPTER XXI

WRITINGS—WIT—CHARACTERISTICS AS A LEADER AND DEBATER

Reed occasionally wrote articles for the magazines and weekly journals, chiefly for the "North American Review" and the "Saturday Evening Post." He also made speeches upon many occasions, at college anniversaries, and before societies that were not political in character. These speeches and writings would fill a considerable volume, and they are well worthy of being collected and preserved. They were prepared with much greater care than his Congressional speeches, many of which were offhand; and for that very reason perhaps they have less movement and are not so easily read. The form of his extemporaneous speech was faultless and his mind worked at its best under the stimulus of a hard fight and a great occasion. The tendency to philosophize which strongly marked his speaking was even more strongly shown in what he wrote. Space will obviously not permit the reproduction here of the outline of argument of any of his prepared orations or magazine articles. The following quotations taken here and there will serve to give a touch of his style and thought.

We will not press too strongly on the seven fat and seven lean kine which came up out of the sea in the dream of

Pharaoh, but you may depend upon it that that dream had its origin in actual facts, and that the alternation of good times and hard times antedates the pyramids.

Ultimately, the people govern. There are ostentatious actors here and there, who stud the stage with panoply or with clanging arms, who seem to do many things; but in the end the popular feeling has its way.

The President of Harvard, in his lamented entrance into the Democratic party, was evidently thinking more of the courage of his convictions than the sense of them.

Why should the President of Harvard make so great a parade amid the applause of the unthinking of his unwillingness to hold office? Has that ceased to be honorable in this country? When the noble bead-roll of Harvard worthies is told, are politicians, who are but statesmen in the making, to be hereafter omitted? Why should a man's advice, who is not and never intends to be a candidate for office, be so much loftier than all others?

A tariff bill could be framed, we think, which would be free from all the errors of that celebrated bill and retain its virtues. Where would you enact such a bill? Why, in your own mind, of course. Unfortunately, a bill enacted in the mind has no extra-territorial force. A bill enacted by Congress, like the progress of the world, is the result of a fierce conflict of opposing human interests, and must be so.

Just think of a non-partisan Free Trader sitting on a tariff tax! Of course he would be above any prejudice except his own.

A tariff bill at any time is not and cannot be the creature of one mind. It means the result of a contest by all interests and all minds. Hence, whenever any man thinks of a tariff he would make, he always thinks of a tariff bill which will never be enacted.

Necessities may mean anything men are willing to work for. . . . Even a peacock feather is a necessity in the early stages of glory.

No form of government can be based on systematic injustice. The election of Congressmen is a national not a local matter. If it be a race-question, is there any reason why the white man in the South should have two votes to my one? Is he alone of mortals to eat his cake and have it too? Is he to suppress his negro and have him also? Among all his remedies he has never proposed to surrender the representation which he owes to the very negro whose vote he refuses. The negro is human enough to be represented, but not human enough to have his vote counted.

Some men like to stand erect, and some men, even after they are rich and in high place, like to crawl.

The equal rights of women have but just reached the region of possibilities. Men have only just left off sneering and have but just begun to consider. Every step of progress from the harem and the veil to free society and property holding has been steadily fought by the vanity, selfishness and indolence, not only of mankind but of womankind also.

It is a fact that it [conservatism] halts all truth for discussion, but it equally halts all untruth. The truth survives, the untruth perishes. Men have but little capacity for the recognition of truth at first sight, and of a hundred things which seem plausible, it is fortunate if one be true. Hence it is well that all things should be held at arm's length and stand the scrutiny of our prejudices and interests, of our religion and our skepticism.

We make more progress by owning our faults than by always dwelling on our virtues.

The statesman, though still without guile, lies less, seldom murders, loves liberty more and power less. Mercantile

morality is higher, attorneys pettifog less and help justice more.

When you don't know what to do, don't do it. If the proposition is to press an oak back into an acorn, it had better be carefully considered.

The best of us only pass from one inaccuracy to another, and so do the worst, but on the whole, the last inaccuracy is nearer the truth than the old one.

When grief has changed into peace, and the enduring result has made the sorrows undergone merely a fading memory instead of a grinding present torture, only then do even the saints realize that sainthood can come in no other way.

He thus rendered the phrase, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*: —

Everything we do not know anything about always looks big. The human creature is imaginative. If he sees a tail disappearing over a fence, he images the whole beast and usually images the wrong beast. . . . Whenever we take a trip into the realms of fancy, we see a good many things that never were.

Speaking of a panic in Wall Street which squeezed the inflation out of values, he said: —

Water flowed down both sides of the street.

It took four thousand years of pagan and fifteen centuries of Christian civilization to produce a two-pronged fork, and another century to bring it into use.

We endure filth diseases thousands of years and call them visitations of God, and when some one brighter than the rest discovers the cause and proposes the remedy we listen, in early ages, with the horror suitable to greet a man who wishes to interfere with God's methods in the universe.

Never expect toleration from a crowd that has other views and has them vividly.

Wrong is never so weak as in its hour of triumph.

If we ever learn to treat the living with the tenderness with which we instinctively treat the dead, we shall then have a civilization well worth distributing.

The description of the view across Portland Harbor, given in his Portland Centennial address, will serve as an example of a different vein: —

The long slope of grassy verdure varied by the darker foliage of the trees spreads wide to the water's edge. Then begins the bright sparkle of the summer sea, that many-twinkling smile of ocean, that countless laughter of the waves which has lighted up the heart of man centuries since Æschylus died, and centuries before he lived. Across the sunlit waters, dotted with the white sails or seamed with the bubbling foam of the steamers' track, past the wharves, bristling with masts and noisy with commerce, the gaze falls upon the houses sloping quickly upward in the center and becoming more and more embowered in trees as they climb the hills at either end. Following the tall spires the eye loses itself in the bright blue sky beyond. . . . If you shut your eyes and let the lofty spires disappear, the happy homes glisten out of sight, and the wharves give place to a curving line of shelving, pebbly beach; if you imagine the bright water unvexed by traffic, the tall peninsula covered with forests and bushy swamps, with the same expanse of island and of sea, and the whole scene undisturbed by any sound save the clanging cries of innumerable birds and water-fowl, you will be looking upon Machigonne as it appeared to George Cleve.

In society Reed was one of the most delightful of men. His talk, usually merry and witty, but sometimes serious and wise, made him the center of any free social

group of which he happened to be a member. He was overwhelmed with invitations to dinner, and wherever he dined he was sure to be the life of the company. He established a primacy in witty table-talk at Washington, which no one questioned. But he had none of the airs of the social autocrat, and never took possession of any company. What he said that was serious was said graciously and without sermonizing. He had a loud and merry laugh, and it was never louder or merrier than when the joke appeared to be on himself, which was not often. And mingled with his wit there was a good deal of social philosophy. If it had been his fortune to be followed about by some such faithful chronicler as followed Johnson, the result would have been a most interesting and amusing work. It is a misfortune that such a mass of brilliant talk should have perished. Reed was too busy a man to write out accounts of dinner-parties that he attended. And since the long social letter has almost disappeared and the diary also, there is little probability that chance reports of his talk will hereafter appear. The diaries which he kept were fragmentary, and they dealt very little with his own part in table conversation.

There was nothing studied about his wit,—it was spontaneous and was entirely characteristic of him. Whenever there was occasion for its exercise, it was ready, and was always sufficient for the occasion. A mere quotation can do him little justice because it is impossible to reproduce his personal characteristics. His slow enunciation and drawl, which were not in

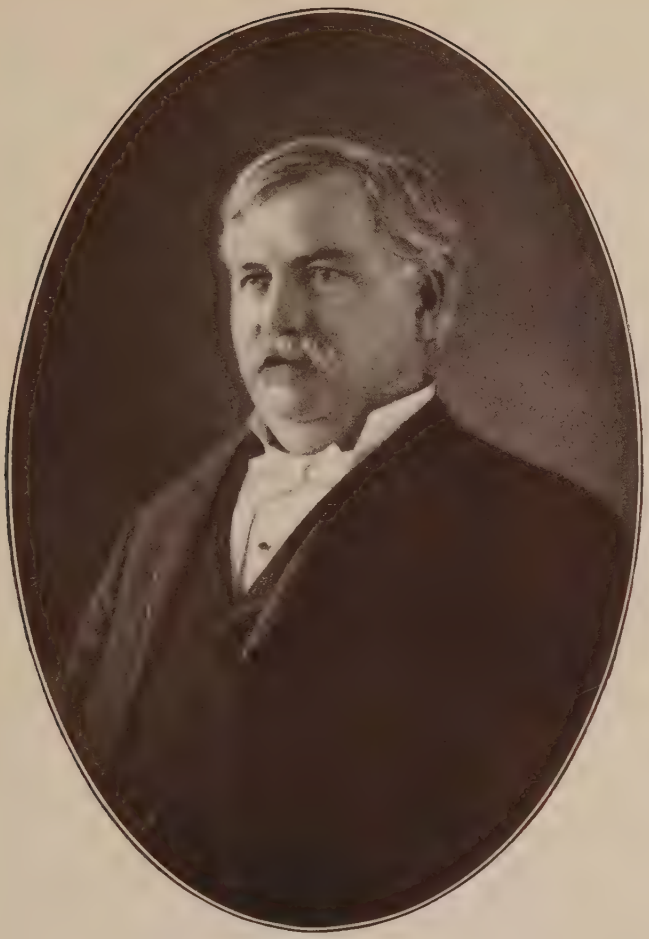
the least affectations but were born in him, his amiability of manner, his overflowing and contagious good-humor, and his gravity when he was serious, all were exactly adapted to what he said and lent much force to it.

What has been presented in the foregoing pages supplemented by a few anecdotes may give a fair idea of the quality of his wit. There was something in the temperament of Mr. Springer, a member from Illinois, that called out Reed's sarcasm. Reed once spoke of him in debate as a gentleman who "on account of his many virtues had been made Chairman of Ways and Means and leader of the House."

Springer, in the course of a speech one day, applying to himself an ancient and oft-quoted saying, attributed to Henry Clay, said, "As for me, I would rather be right than be President." Reed drawled out in reply, "Well, the gentleman will never be either."

One day in one of the House lobbies, with many of the members lounging about, General Henderson was chaffing Reed about his size and asked, "How much do you weigh, Tom?" Reed replied gravely that he weighed one hundred and ninety-nine pounds, which was probably seventy-five pounds under his real weight. "Oh, we all know better than that," said Henderson. "Well," said Reed, "I'll own up to two hundred pounds, but no gentleman ever weighs over two hundred."

Once the House was making an effort to secure a quorum, and, as is usually done in such cases, tele-



D. B. Henderson

grams were sent to members who were absent. One man, who was delayed by a flood on the railroad, telegraphed Reed, saying, "Washout on line, can't come." Reed telegraphed back, "Buy another shirt and come on next train."

He called on the family of a member who was very ill, and when he inquired about his condition the member's wife replied that he was out of his head much of the time and did not know what he was talking about. "He ought to come up to the House," replied Reed; "they are all that way up there."

When Reed was Speaker, he overruled on an occasion a point of order made by a very clever Democratic member. The latter discovered that Reed, in his little book on parliamentary procedure, called "Reed's Rules," had taken a different position, and thinking to confound the Speaker, he walked in triumph to the desk, book in hand, and pointing to the passage, asked the Speaker to read it. After the Speaker had read it, the member asked him to explain it. "Oh," replied Reed coolly, "the *book* is wrong."

He was bitterly opposed to our war with the Philippines, and he expressed his idea of the glory of the war in a concrete case in the following fashion. One morning, when the newspapers had printed a report that our army had captured Aguinaldo's young son, Reed came to his office and found his law partner at work at his desk. Reed affected surprise and said, "What, are you working to-day? I should think you would be celebrating. I see by the papers that the American army

has captured the infant son of Aguinaldo, and at last accounts was in hot pursuit of the mother."

He once heard a man warmly arguing in favor of taking the Philippines on the ground that we should take American freedom to them. "Yes," said Reed, "canned freedom."

Alluding to two of his colleagues in the House, he said: "They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge."

When his daughter Katherine, or "Kitty" as he called her, was a little girl she had a cat to which she was much devoted. One day the kitten was sleeping in Reed's chair when he was about to sit down. His daughter in horror gave the chair a sudden pull to save the cat from annihilation and as a result Reed sat down heavily on the floor. It was a rather serious happening for a man of his size, and even a lesser man might easily have lost his temper. But the only notice he took of the matter was to say gravely after he had got on his feet, "Kitty, remember that it is easier to get another cat than another father."

Once when he was speaking to the House, a member insisted on interrupting him to ask a question. Reed yielded and the member asked a partisan question which had very little point. Reed most effectively disposed of the matter by saying: "The gentleman from Maryland is of course not the flower of our intelligence, but he knows better than to ask such a question as that."

During one of his campaigns he was speaking at

South Berwick in his district, and he was near the end of the speech. The audience was hanging upon the words of his peroration when a man came down in his seat with a crash. Such an incident would often disconcert a speaker, and the "last magnificent paragraph" would be spoken with little effect, if spoken at all. Reed at once secured again the command of his audience by saying, "Well, you must at least credit me with making a knockdown argument."

Very much used to be said about Washington malaria, and one day some one suggested to Reed that the term was employed often to cover the effects of drinking too much whisky. "Washington malaria," replied Reed, " can be bought for about two dollars a gallon."

Reed was a master, probably unrivaled, in the art of making a five-minute speech. There was much wisdom as well as drollery in his remark one evening to a member who was a really eloquent but somewhat diffuse speaker: "——, you do not understand the theory of five-minute debate. The object is to convey to the House in the space of five minutes either information or misinformation. You have consumed several periods of five minutes this afternoon without doing either."[1]

The reputation of being a wit or humorist is a disastrous reputation for one to achieve in our national House of Representatives and probably also in any other field of our public life. There is danger that such

[1] Henry Cabot Lodge's article on Reed in the *Century Magazine*.

a character will never afterwards be taken seriously. More than one man of a wide range of talents has begun his career with a "funny" speech, and has never been able to outlive its influence, however solemn he might afterwards appear, or however learned and profound. That Reed was never in the slightest danger of gaining such a reputation is one proof of his caliber. While he was more witty and could be more humorous than other men, his wit and humor were only weapons among others in his varied arsenal just as formidable of their kind, and their use was never indulged in for display, but was severely subordinated to the requirements of the debate. In a parliamentary battle he was not merely a whole army corps, but a whole army, with its mighty volume of musketry, its squadrons of cavalry, and its pieces of great ordnance with their heavy weight of metal. When he was upon the floor the House received just what the occasion demanded. The opinion of Mr. Lodge is worth a great deal. He has been closely associated during a long public career with the statesmen and orators of his own country, and has known many of those abroad. He said of Reed: "He was the finest, the most effective debater that I have ever seen or heard." And again he said: "I fully appreciate the truth of Emerson's doctrine of the force of under-statement; but I cannot express my own belief in regard to Mr. Reed without also saying that in my opinion there never has been a greater or more perfectly equipped leader in any parliamentary body at any period." Familiar

also as he was with Reed in social as well as in public life, his word is weighty when he says, "No more agreeable companion ever lived. Like Dr. Johnson he loved to sit and have his talk out, and no one was ever better to listen to or a better listener, for his sympathies were wide, his interests unlimited, and nothing human was alien to him." [1]

There could not have been a better judge than Senator George F. Hoar. He said of Reed: —

> He had a very strong hold on Massachusetts. His sincerity, his simplicity, his inflexible honesty, his courage and his sagacity, as well as his wit, of a kind that has been peculiar to New England from a time even before Dr. Franklin down to Hosea Biglow, just suited the taste of the people. When he went to Europe some years ago, I gave him a letter to Lowell. They sat up together late into the morning hours, and I heard from both of the delight which each of them took in that night's talk. The people liked to hear him on public questions better than any other man, not excepting Blaine or McKinley.

Mr. John Sharp Williams of Mississippi, who had been the leader of the Democratic party in the House, referred to Reed as "that ever memorable genius, the ablest running debater the American people ever saw."

Reed delighted to have his joke about the Senate, and especially about long debates which there was no rule to terminate, even when the great majority of the Senate itself was desirous of voting. One day he happened to enter the Chamber when a Senator was de-

[1] In the *Century Magazine.*

livering a speech with nearly all the seats empty, and Reed ejaculated, as much to himself as to the member by his side, "There does n't seem to be a quorum in the divine presence to-day."

In one of his unpublished manuscripts purporting to be a "History of the United States, published in 1940," he says that the people had grown weary of the caliber of their presidents between 1880 and 1890, and had adopted a constitutional amendment providing that they should be chosen by the Senate out of the Senate itself. He thus describes the first election:—

> So intense was the public excitement that the whole nation left its vocations, flung business to the winds, and assembled in front of the Capitol where, in the open day, the tremendous scene of the choice of the wisest man should be made by and out of the wisest body of men. It was by secret ballot, so that no possibility of influence by public clamor could disturb the serene judgment of the Immortals. When the ballots had been collected and spread out, the Chief Justice, who presided, was observed to hesitate and those nearest could see by his pallor that something unexpected had happened. But with a strong effort he rose to his feet and through a megaphone, then recently invented by Edison, shouted to the vast multitude the astounding result: seventy-six Senators had each received one vote. For a moment a stillness as of death settled upon the multitude. Never until that moment had the people realized that, like the Deacon's One Hoss Shay the Senate of the United States was one level mass of wisdom and virtue, perfect in all its parts, and radiant from North to South with that light of intelligence which never shone on sea or shore.

Among his papers was found a manuscript on Imperialism, apparently written during the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris, and while McKinley was

vaguely speaking upon his Western tour about "Destiny." It weightily states his position upon the wisdom of our over-sea expansion and is worthy of even more liberal quotations than those which follow:

History probably teaches that nations have their destinies like individuals, and the unknown, unanticipated and unexpected has so large a part in it that wisdom and foresight are but small factors in the development of a nation. Nevertheless what foresight we have and what wisdom we have acquired we must exercise. Otherwise we are no better than the beasts of the field to whom the slaughter-house is a surprise as well as a shock and which they doubtless, being ignorant, call destiny and an overruling providence. Escape they cannot. We can.

The people of this country for a hundred and twenty years have with one accord thought themselves singularly fortunate in the great men who were, so far as great men could be, the founders of the republic, and yet only a few days ago, with the tacit and also vociferous approval of the American people, an English writer has declared that "The farewell address of Washington has ceased to be the compass of the statesman and become the curio of the historian." Such a change as this concisely and rhetorically stated deserves some other consideration than tumultuous hurrahs and self-congratulation. Six months ago the new doctrine was not and to-day it is already bursting its swaddling-clothes. It seems, moreover, likely that we, the American people, will have no discussion of this new idea, but will only have the poor privilege of saying what we will do with it and nothing at all about whether we will have it or not.

Wisdom of course did not die with forefathers even as wise and famous as were ours. The world does not roll about the sun a hundred and twenty times and about itself forty and four thousand times without evolving conditions and awakening new notions, some of which are for the good of the world. Nevertheless all new notions are not good. Indeed we know that most of them are bad and that all of them

should pass under careful scrutiny before being put into action. The spoken and even the written word may be harmless and fly away, being winged, but deeds cannot depart and are never effaced from the history of the race. We may reclimb heights from which we have fallen, but oftener nations find that, after a mistake, there is no place for repentance even if they seek it carefully with tears. . . . At the beginning of this year we were most admirably situated. We had no standing army which could overrun our people. We were at peace within our own borders and with all the world. . . . Even the misfortunes of hard times we had so wrested to our advantage that the next period of prosperity on the verge of which we then were looked brighter than all the wonderful past. I am quite well aware that there are those who will speak with due contempt for the base commercial spirit which these suggestions may indicate, and that to the truly patriotic mind men killed in battle and a whole army fleeing from yellow fever are much more desirable things to a Christian nation than wealth the result of intellect and peace. What has been said would not have been ventured upon had there not been signs that the commercial spirit which it is dishonoring to invoke while trying to prevent war, is much appealed to when we are considering the results of war. . . .

We were then in a condition which secured to us the respect and envy of the civilized world. The quarrels which other nations have we did not have. The sun did set on our dominions and our drum-beat did not encircle the world with our martial airs. Our guns were not likely to be called upon to throw projectiles which cost, each of them, the price of a happy home, nor did any bombardment seem likely to cost us the value of a village. I have said that we were a harmonious nation. Perhaps what should have been said was that we were on the way to become so; for no man acquainted with our system of government and its practical workings could fail to see that our vast territory had given us much trouble to govern satisfactorily, because of different views entertained by the different sections of the nation. Nevertheless we were substantially of one blood and the

railroad, distance-defying, and the telegraph and telephone, time-defying, were doing their work in reconciling to common ideas, not diverse peoples, but peoples separated by local self-government and distance.

What is the object in forming a nation? So far as the life of most nations goes they were gathered together by that kind of progressive instinct which caused families to unite and tribes to be formed. Yet in all cases the purpose was the common preservation against other nations, a union to repel the foe from without. Then ambition tempted, and in due time the overgrown nation fell to pieces of its own weight under internal dissensions and under the attack of a larger neighbor. Such has been the history of all empires. I do not say that it will always be so, for there seems to be a faint dawn which indicates a coming day when nations will respect other nations' right to live as now individuals respect the right of their neighbors to live. There was a time when the main struggle of each man was to kill the other and keep himself alive. It must be admitted however that the history of the last thirty years indicates a long wait before the curtain rises on the federation of the world. Our own commissioners at Paris are now illustrating the old doctrine that the reasons of the strongest are the soundest. . . .

Our fathers did not make their Declaration of Independence as a piece of rhetoric but as a guide of national life. It was a degenerate day which pronounced the noble words to be only glittering generalities to please the ears of children and to adorn the phrases of orators. That degeneracy has been paid for in blood. . . .

Human selfishness pervades all human life. It is the mainspring of human action. Any man's selfishness would wreck all his surroundings were it not for the antidote, which is the selfishness of all the rest. Therefore if men are to be justly governed they must participate in government. Do I mean to say that all men are of equal power? No they cannot be. But give every man equal rights, and intellect and wisdom will justify themselves by persuading where they have no power of command.

The highest level of liberty in any land is the liberty of

the meanest citizen. Do you want another example from the history of our new ally, with whom we are to unite to propagate liberty by force? Already plans are being matured to govern with military power the lands we are conquering until such time as the blessings of liberty can be fully vouchsafed. So England began with Ireland. Read what Charles James Fox said a hundred years ago in the famous speech of February 3, 1800. Ireland began under a military despotism, and remained under the tutelage of a nation we deem worthy to be our companion in the regeneration of the world. Did this good nation govern unselfishly? Did she make out of Ireland more than Ireland could have made out of herself? After more than a century of dreadful struggle England, proud obstinate England, found no other way than to admit to equal rights the enslaved land, "the aliens in blood and religion." So in the whole history of the world there is no peace for the governors until the governed are governors also.

Six months ago we all believed this. The first man we met on the street and the last would have but echoed each other in reply. Why have we all changed? . . .

We have before us a most tremendous problem brought upon us as carelessly and as jauntily as if it were but the play of summer breezes. . . .

Freedom never meant the best government in the abstract, it only meant the government best fitted to the people governed. We have not the best laws in the United States that wise men could dream of. What we have is the best laws our people are fit for; and as they grow in knowledge and sense the laws follow in laggard procession. But they follow.

Porto Rico is not to us the lofty result of love of liberty, native or foreign. It is an indemnity. A republic dependent upon the consent of the governed has taken an indemnity in a war for liberty, to help pay the expenses of a high and holy quest. This may seem to be a slight lowering of purpose, but if the newspapers speak truly and the people have welcomed this with loud acclaim, then we may waive that and speak of what is before us. If we are to have this island we must govern it, and the question is, how. We are sometimes told

that there will be no trouble. See how England governed her colonies. All we have to do is to do what she does. It is all very simple. Yet the principles of our government are totally different. We say, or used to say before Washington became an English curio, that no man or set of men was wise enough to govern others. Where are we to get these men wise enough to attempt it? I notice from some of the papers that we are to have a set of men spring up endowed with great broad views, men hitherto unknown in politics, who will do this governing, and the happy Porto Rican, relieved at once from Spanish thralldom and the necessity of governing himself, will see the dawn of a great civilization moving from North and South Carolina and lighting up the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea. . . .

Let us come out of the clouds and say how we will govern. Or rather let us face the fact that under our system and under our principles we can govern but one way. When Abraham Lincoln gave the sanction of his great name to Parker's words of wisdom, "government of the people, for the people and by the people," he knew that not one single clause could be omitted. If it be "of the people" and "for the people" it must also be "by the people." Has the Gettysburg speech also become a British curio?

The Philippines are obnoxious to all that has been written, with the addition of disadvantages all their own. They are in the Tropics. They are inhabited by peoples still more unlike us than the Porto Ricans. Laws that fit us cannot fit them. If we are to shoot negroes with gatling guns, what would we do to the Filipinos?

But there are deeper questions involved. When this nation was established there were, speaking broadly, no republics in the world. We determined that in this hemisphere the experiment of free government should be tried, unawed by influence of the Old World. Hence we established the Monroe Doctrine, and we can all remember the whirlwind of passion with which we, unarmed and unprepared, greeted the attempt of Great Britain to oppress the Republic of Venezuela. Is that Doctrine also a British curio? They so understand it, and "Punch" has given his best jeer

for half a century. "Pray, who are you, Sir?" says Dame Europa. "Uncle Sam," was the reply. "Ah! any relation to the late Colonel Monroe?" Are we prepared to give up the doctrine that we will brook no interference from outside in this hemisphere, that the New World shall here undisturbed maintain liberty and equality — "government of the people for the people and by the people"? But we cannot do both things. We cannot interfere in the Old World and demand non-interference in the New. . . . Destiny can hardly be replied to, because it is a word which shows that thinking has ended, or perhaps has never begun. . . .

Public opinion is the foundation and the sole foundation on which any nation can rest. But it is public opinion solidified by discussion, by full and mature reflection, guided by the past as well as the present. The voice of those crying aloud in the market-places is not the voice of God either for time or for eternity. There was once a city where for the space of two solid hours all the people cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" For two hours public sentiment was unanimous. Yet in that very city at that very time Paul was preaching the Living God.

There is a final consideration not to be forgotten. We cannot measure our demands, whether wise or unwise, by our grasping desires. The eternal principles of justice demand recognition. We are great and powerful. Never for a moment has Spain had an ultimate hope. We are four to one in numbers. We are ten to one in credit, and wealth and credit are the strongest sinews in modern war. We have been three hundred miles from our base and Spain three thousand. Spain has shown her weakness sooner than the wisest dreamed. She has fled at the first skirmish. The Inspector General of our own army has declared that the war was not ours but the Lord's. Think of it! a hundred thousand troops in Cuba alone and no battle! Surely the hosts of Midian broke no more signally before the lamps and pitchers of Gideon.

But these things, strong as they are, are but trifles beside the great risk we run of forgetting the foundation principles of our government. Our Fathers forgot them once, and

Lincoln's Second Inaugural tells the solemn story in words as stately and sublime as ever flowed from lips inspired by God. I do not compare our possible governing of others without their participation to the sin of human slavery; but, as I remember the story of the Indians whom we have governed at home and of the negroes we are governing at home, that time may come when I can claim the credit of great moderation speaking of the government of people utterly unknown four thousand miles away.

The announcement of Reed's intention to practice law in New York was variously interpreted. By many it was rightly considered to mean his retirement from public life. Senator Hoar construed it in that way and having very much at heart the Philippine question he wrote Reed the following letter.

WORCESTER, MASS., *Apr.* 21, 1899.

MY DEAR MR. SPEAKER: —

It is a very bad thing indeed to take off the brake when the wagon is going downhill. I am very much afraid we shall tip over. But we will trust in God till the breeching breaks.

I am, with cordial regard,
Faithfully yours,
GEO. F. HOAR.

Some of Reed's colleagues in the House did not think his resumption of law practice, although in another state than his own, necessarily meant his retirement from Congress; and since he had been chosen again to the House, he was urged to accept another election to the Speakership. One of the members from Ohio, Mr. J. H. Bromwell, wrote him as follows: —

. . . If such a thing were possible I would like, for the benefit of the majority in the next House, if you could remain a member until after the reorganization, accept the

Speakership, permit the House, after getting together, to select your successor, and then, if you still adhere to your determination to withdraw, afford your associates an opportunity to tender you such an ovation as you are entitled to by reason of your past eminent services and as will display to the country the admiration, respect and personal esteem of your fellow members.

General Henderson, who was destined to succeed Reed as Speaker, wrote him, offering to support him again if he would retain his seat. Reed soon set at rest the last doubt of his intention, and his retirement was accepted as a fact.

CHAPTER XXII

LAW PRACTICE — BOWDOIN SPEECH — LAST DAYS

When Reed retired from public life he entered upon the practice of law in New York City. He connected himself with the strong and prosperous firm of Simpson, Thacher, and Barnum, of which he became senior partner and thereafter his name appeared first in the firm name. The practice of the firm had been very lucrative, and undoubtedly his connection with it attracted new clients and added much to its prosperity. He thus was enabled speedily to repair his fortunes. He had no sooner established himself in a successful law practice in Portland than he entered Congress, and after that event his practice must have steadily dwindled if indeed it did not entirely cease to exist. What he received from this source, from writing, and from his official salary, was sufficient to support him and his family in comfort, and probably to permit also some saving, as he lived prudently. But he was far from wealthy on his retirement after twenty-five years of public service.

Mr. John Moore, a wealthy New York banker, was a native of Maine, and he and Reed had long been friends. Moore was partly responsible for the opportunity that came to Reed to enter the law firm, and doubtless also for other opportunities. As if to furnish

a further proof of the free-masonry existing among the sons of Maine when they meet in so distant a place as New York, Mr. A. G. Paine proved of great assistance to Reed. Paine possessed remarkable business talent and had accumulated a large fortune. Reed and he had been boys together in Maine, but from the time when Reed was ten years old until he came to New York, they had scarcely met. Paine took a deep interest in him, and helped him to invest his savings so that they multiplied; and between Moore and Paine and the law firm and his own labor Reed in a few years acquired a comfortable fortune.

Those were days well along in the McKinley era, when for a decade the rich indeed flourished like the green bay tree, but when the poor also were permitted to look into the promised land of prosperity. The noise of the Greenbacker was not heard in the land, and the golden age of the Chautauqua orator had not yet dawned.

Reed took a hand at the law work of the firm, advising and preparing cases for trial.[1] He sometimes appeared in the United States courts, and once at least he argued a case before the Supreme Court at Washington. A friend who knew his manner well in the House of Representatives, and who happened to hear this argument before the Court, said that he spoke in his House style and that he greatly entertained the Justices. The truth is that Reed spoke himself, whether in

[1] *Vide* address on Reed before the Bar Association of New York City, *Year Book*, 1904, by Thomas H. Hubbard.

Congress or the courts or on any public occasion, and he was much too great a man to affect any particular style or to try to narrow himself to fit the supposed requirements of any particular tribunal. He thus helped compensate the justices for much tedious punishment administered by lawyers who keep their noses in a record of instances and of quillets, and who do not strike out manfully at the judgment and good sense of the men before them.

Reed soon gathered about himself in New York a circle of friends in addition to those who have been mentioned. Mark Twain and he became almost inseparable. Dr. Butler, the President of Columbia University, was also one of the circle.

Reed was invited to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration at the Harvard Commencement of 1899, as will appear from the following letter: —

My dear Sir: —

In behalf of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard, I write to ask if you will honor us by delivering the oration at the annual meeting of the Society, June 29 next.

We can promise you an excellent audience and a dinner which is more to be commended from an intellectual than from a gastronomic point of view, and I assure you that it will be a great pleasure to us all if you will consent to come.

Very truly y'rs.,

Moorfield Storey.

He had, however, determined to visit Europe again before actively entering upon his law practice, and, in company with Mrs. Reed and their daughter, he spent the summer traveling abroad, chiefly on the Conti-

nent. The Reeds received many attentions from distinguished men in Europe, especially in France, and in Belgium, where they were entertained by the King. Reed was an indefatigable sightseer, with a fresh and unquenchable interest which led him to begin his work early in the morning and to continue it until night, without even stopping for the midday meal.

After his retirement he took a long cruise with Mr. Henry H. Rogers, on the latter's yacht, and another member of the company was Mark Twain. He planned to travel more and to pass his winters in Washington.

Reed took a keen interest in public questions, among which those relating to the Philippines were uppermost. His fundamental political creed, which was embodied in the Declaration of Independence, had been, as we have seen, shocked by our Asiatic venture. When he learned that our military policy in those islands put in practice some of the devices which had been applied by Weyler in Cuba and had startled the people of the country, he was filled with indignation. There is among his papers a form of an ironical petition as if from Weyler to Congress, of which the following is a copy: —

To the Congress of the United States: —

The procession of events since I was Governor-General of Cuba has been such that I am sure every one, especially those who were very strenuous against me a few years ago, will acknowledge that the time has come for me to receive justice at the hands of a high minded people, whose acts have recently been of such a character that they must now understand the motives which actuated me.

No one will deny that, by the law of nations, the Cubans owed to Spain allegiance and orderly conduct, just such as are now owed by the Filipinos to the United States since the Treaty of Paris. Had the Cubans refrained from attacks upon our soldiers, we intended to give them such liberty as was suitable and such as they were capable of exercising in the opinion of Spain, their Sovereign Lord and Ruler. Instead of submitting to such reasonable control as we intended to have, they fired upon our troops just as some of you say the misguided Filipinos did upon your troops, regardless of our honorable intentions. Thereupon, you said, as we did, that, until they submitted, you had nothing to do but to reduce them to submission. After that, you intended to do them justice. These misguided persons, like the Cubans, did not realize that one always gets better justice administered to him after he is down than if he were still in the ring. It may be that this metaphor is badly handled by me since it is one employed mostly by the English-speaking peoples who are now so happily united by a common endeavor to convince, the one the Boers, and the other the Filipinos, that liberty consists in the control of the stronger. It is true that, in reducing the Cubans to submission, there were methods adopted that excited compassion on the part of Senator Proctor and other reliable gentlemen, and stirred your American people with deep and destructive indignation. It then seemed to you that injuring people in war ought not to be tolerated, and you were so near and so potent that my efforts were obliged to be discontinued. I do not complain of that, for you did not then know that "war was hell," and had for the moment forgotten that "all really good work is rough in the doing," as has said your noble President, "the great and good friend" to whom the Emperor will in due time send a bronze king in token that your country is worthy of better things. You did not, when you attacked my administration, have any forecast of the future, so as to enable you to see on the wall the names of General Bell and Smith and Waller, and other persons from whom I have received the flattery of an imitation. I understand that some of your people think your conduct is justified by what your

ancestors did to the Indians. If that be a justification, I can assure you that I am entitled to the same; for Las Casas, a priest as holy as any you now have, assures me in his books that we Spaniards treated the Indians as badly as you ever did.

I will not detain your attention longer, but come directly to the request which is very dear to me. Now you have learned that "war is hell," and have adopted those forms of the hereafter to which I had given my sanction, would it not seem to you just to adopt, when speaking of me, some forms of expression of a more sympathetic nature than those formerly used, when the future was a sealed book, and the idea of spreading civilization had not reached that "roughness" which characterizes "all really good work."

I beg to tender to you the assurance of the distinguished and increasing consideration with which I am,

Sincerely yours,

WEYLER.

He ridiculed too our "purchase" of the Philippines, and, as an abolitionist of the old school to whom the selling of men was most abhorrent, he would satirically reckon up the amount each Malay cost us per head. The following from a letter written to J. C. Courts, the Clerk of the House Committee on Appropriations, illustrates the ironical vein in which he would discuss the matter in a familiar letter to a friend: —

PINE POINT, ME., 15 *Aug.* 1900.

Thanks for the statistics which I hope to find use for. . . . I have got to hunt all over your figures even to find out how much each yellow man cost us in the bush. As I make it out he has cost $30 per Malay and he is still in the bush.

Why did n't you purchase him of Spain F. O. B., with definite freight-rate, and insurance paid? . . .

The following letter is of interest and is self-explanatory: —

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, *Oct.* 3, 1901.

DEAR TOM: —

I thank you for your letter. No man could wish to become President under the shadow of so awful a disaster; but it would be morbid not to accept the facts and do all that can be done. Give my love to Mrs. Reed.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

On February 20, 1902, he spoke in New York before the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. It was in the main a droll speech with some serious discussion of journalism.

It must be confessed [*he said*] that I know very little about newspapers. Probably a good man could not know much unless, indeed, he was a publisher or an editor. That the editors and publishers are good men, actuated by the highest motives, I notice incidentally in the newspapers themselves. I do not quarrel with them because they admit it; but I wish they would not admit it every day. . . . Which reminds me to say to you (being for the moment in a position of superiority) that absolute goodness and disinterestedness can be predicated of no profession outside of the profession of the law. . . . Even now, if a man were to keep files of his paper, he would have to live outdoors himself. Newspapers are what they are, by virtue of a power greater than themselves. They are much more the product of the readers than of the editors and publishers. . . . The newspaper would be better if the subscriber was, and even preachers would do better if the congregation would let them.

He would occasionally make a journey to Washington after his retirement; but after he ceased to be a member he probably never went upon the floor of the

House, as was his right under the rules. When he visited the Capitol he would repair to the inner room of the Committee on Ways and Means, of which he had been a member; word would be passed around among his friends, and he would soon be surrounded by them. It was a rare treat at such times to hear him talk upon such subjects as were uppermost in his mind.

His last public appearance in his native city was at the "Old Home" celebration, on August 7, 1900. The City Hall, which was crowded with his friends and neighbors, shook with applause as he made a very brief speech, the concluding words of which were: —

> Here's to the State of Maine, settled mostly by the blood of old England, but always preferring liberty to ancestry; a strong old democratic state, yet among the first to help give liberty to the slave. May her future be as noble as her past.
>
> Here is to the state of Maine, the land of the bluest skies, the greenest earth, the richest air, the strongest, and, what is better, the sturdiest men, the fairest, and, what is best of all, the truest women under the sun.

On July 25, 1902, Bowdoin College celebrated its hundredth anniversary and Reed delivered the principal address on the occasion. It was chiefly on the subject on which he never grew weary of talking, — the rule of the people and the way in which they work out the destinies of the world. It was a notable speech, as the following quotations will show: —

> Progress must be of the race as a whole, and not of a few individuals who are to be leaders and masters. . . . All

assemblages of men are different from the men themselves. Neither intelligence nor culture can prevent a mob from acting as a mob. The wise man and the knave lose their identity and merge themselves into a new being. The habits of individual life are broken up and the safeguards as well. In our everyday life we have to be in constant control of ourselves. We know our limited powers and do not purpose to attempt what we cannot do. As part of a mob, that limitation is lost. We feel that we have the power of all, let ourselves loose, and over-ride our acquired limitations. Our reason at such times will not work at its best, for our habits are broken up, and human reason for everyday life depends on habits. . . . Our constitution and system of government are in full recognition of the fact that our people are to govern and also of the equally important fact that they should have a chance to learn how to govern. We elect a House every two years. We elect a President for four years and a Senate for six. Why are there these differences? Why should not the people have opportunity to change all of them every two years and make a clean sweep as it seemed to them good? Simply because wisdom is not born in an hour. Our forefathers believed that the discussions involved in changing during three different periods the Executive and the two chambers, would involve also an education of the whole people which would make their judgment sound. Three times within my experience the judgment of the people of this country has been changed on three great questions. That the final judgment was correct is not for me to say in this presence, but as a rule I think I should prefer the judgment of men after discussion rather than without discussion. It is a great thing to have institutions so framed that the people can educate themselves before they are called upon to act. Time and truth against any two is sound doctrine, but truth without time has not an even chance with error.

Learned men often lead the attacks upon new discoveries. One would naturally think the multitude would at least be the average of the individuals who compose it, but it cannot be so. Too many of the wise and intelligent conceal their wisdom and refuse to make opposition to ignorance, because

they prefer the popularity which comes from men to the righteousness which comes from God. . . . The time which elapses from the moment when a new idea for the good of the race strikes the thought of wise men and the time when a working majority adopts it, is most astonishingly long. Whole generations come and go with the truth in full view, and we rest devoted to our ignorance. Read Glanvil's book defending witchcraft, and see on how small a basis of apparent reason a worldwide faith can rest, a faith which led so many innocent men to conviction for an impossible crime. . . .

You may think for a moment that these things were so long ago that one might as well mourn over the deaths of the Deluge, yet some of these horrors were inflicted by these very engines within five generations of men, perhaps within a hundred years. In France itself the right to inflict torture was abolished only a little more than a hundred years ago. . . . There were here and there men who opposed it faintly, on the ground, as La Bruyère put it, that "Torture was a marvellous invention entirely sure to destroy an innocent man who had a feeble constitution and to save a guilty man who was born robust." Nobody fought it because it was cruel but because it did not surely elicit truth, and the first thought about it to-day — the thought of suffering and anguish — was the last thought of a hundred years ago. . . .

When we declaim with fervor and satisfaction that the eternal years of God belong to truth and see in ecstatic vision the triumph of the future, we seldom have it in our thoughts that the reason why truth is given the eternal years of God is because she needs them every one. . . . Truth does not prevail by being known to the wise, it must penetrate to the depths of the human race to be prevalent. The great intellects even, and the great sages, cannot enjoy truth until we all have it and until it has been reduced to a habit of life. . . .

I have thus given a few examples to illustrate my idea, which is that those who are comparatively uneducated at any state of the world's progress are not only necessarily the most numerous, but they have an influence which is out of proportion to their numbers. Men even when wrong, if in

earnest, count for more than those who are right. Momentum is weight multiplied by velocity. With wide knowledge come doubt and difficulties. Ignorance has no hesitations. "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason."

To me it seems apparent that the final cause of this fact — the reason of its existence — is the unalterable determination of the divine powers that the human race shall be kept together. . . . If the plain people could once get it into their minds that the growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord of those under them was essential to their own progress and happiness, there would be heartier and more useful support to all measures which tend to uplift us all. . . .

When the slaves were liberated, the first thought of some of the best of them was to be learned preachers, doctors, and lawyers. Heaven forbid that those who are worthy should be cut off from any employment, but the longing was not a wise one. To-day the colored race are acquiring that knowledge which is the basis of their future hope, the knowledge of how to live an everyday life and cope with everyday duties.

When these people have demonstrated, as they surely will, their capabilities for everyday life, they will grow to all the rest. On the other hand, the scorn with which the negro is treated is a blunder. It keeps him down, and the scorner also. It is the same thing that the white slaves met with in old feudal days. It took a thousand years for them to reach equality. If the principles of the Christian religion could be honestly applied, it would solve the problem somewhat sooner. If religion does not solve it, selfishness will; for men will sooner or later understand that a mass of ignorance cannot exist without lowering the standard of those who think themselves the better classes. . . .

I have dwelt upon the darker side of the history of human progress, not because the other side is not bright with the possibilities of a better life, but because we all flatter ourselves about it overmuch. There is no lack of those who glorify the advance and forget the long years of struggle. There are those also who make past advances an excuse for

present rest. Some of our lessons we have only half learned. We go back to the bad past on very slight provocation. There are places in the United States where prevails the right of private war, which five hundred years ago found its grave in France. But before this audience, I have no right to encroach upon modern history. All it would be proper for me to do would be to insist that righteousness has not yet been firmly established even here, and duty still has its call upon us, every one.

But is it possible in this complex mystery of human progress for individual man to do anything? Are we not like the bees, governed by the spirit of the hive, carrying us whither we know not? Are we not the victims of destiny, with our lot marked out for us beyond our will and ken? Is not this a world under control of the survival of the fittest — not the fittest to enjoy the society of the Almighty, but the fittest to trample on each other? I do not believe it. Survival of the strongest may be new to science, but it is not new to religion. The strong, remorseless arm striking down the weak and possessing the earth, the unpitying tramp of the horses' hoofs devastating the land, are well known to the years that have gone, and they filled the thoughts of men; but they are no longer supremely prevalent on earth. Justice and equality and the rights of man have an ever-increasing sway, and the power of the mighty in arms is every day more and more mitigated by that justice and love which satisfies the longings of the human heart better than even riches or superiority or power. Whatever contribution any man makes to humanity and justice will not be lost, but will be gathered up and be among the treasures of the Almighty.

Near the time of the celebration of the College Centennial Reed entertained his classmates at a dinner at the Cumberland Club. He was at that time apparently in good health and he greatly enjoyed the occasion. Augustine Jones, a classmate and a famous teacher, wrote Reed a letter in which he presented him

as the central figure of the dinner, as he almost invariably was on similar occasions in Washington or elsewhere. A portion of the letter follows: —

Sam Johnson's Literary Club was the uppermost thought in my mind, except the Class of 1860, as we sat in that circle. You seemed to have the Olympian power over things as host born also of wide experience of affairs and exalted position, and constantly reminded me of the "giant of learning" in the midst of smaller men. I am sure that without a shade of envy in a single soul of us we were to a man proud to have been your classmates.

On this letter is minuted Reed's reply written in his own hand: —

PORTLAND, ME., 30 *June*, 1902.

DEAR AUGUSTINE: —

It is just like your old modest fashion to give us the glory and not take your share.

It is a curious fact that while you were writing that very letter I was thinking of how much better that same dinner was because you were there and set so much of the talk in motion.

We did have a rare good time such as we may have again, but cannot sanely look for, so controlled are men by little circumstances which do so much when they are combined as they happily were that evening. I have the same wonder over it that you have. I had grave doubts of it before, but none after. It comforts me much that we all were so merry and so full of the occasion.

Brown and I talked it over after you were gone and we rejoiced.

I was about to write you especially thanking you for being there and am more than glad that you felt repaid.

With kindest regards,

Truly yours,

T. B. REED.

But such a "rare good time" of which he held out the hope he was not destined to have again. He was probably not himself conscious of any failing of health, but he appeared to be less strong. He had been troubled with lameness in an ankle and on the advice of his physician had dieted to reduce his weight by twenty pounds. Having accomplished that, he felt better, and continued dieting until he had shrunk twenty pounds more. He had a less robust appearance, his face became more pallid and by contrast his eyes seemed even larger and more brilliant. He complained of vague discomforts, and became apprehensive and nervous but was averse to consulting doctors. He had probably been afflicted for many months with the disease to which he finally succumbed, the progress of which might have been arrested by prompt treatment.

On Friday, November 28, 1902, he was a guest at a dinner in New York City, given by Mr. George Harvey to Mark Twain. He made a brief and very informal speech, in which he joked the humorist about some of the things that happened on the cruise they had made together on Mr. Rogers's yacht. Among other things he accused Mark Twain of permitting himself, "in the enthusiasm of the moment, to play trumps when he has got more suit-cards left in his hand," and he alluded to himself as the only person aboard the yacht "who had real gravity that was calculated to keep the ship in order and keep her down."

He did not reach home that night until after one o'clock, and he rose at six to take a train for Phila-

delphia, where he had an appointment. While in Philadelphia he was extremely busy. On Sunday he went to Washington where he had some business before the Supreme Court. As the Shoreham where he had lived so long was temporarily closed, he went to the Arlington Hotel.

On Monday, he visited the Supreme Court. During the afternoon of that day, he suffered a sharp attack of pain. On Tuesday he again went to the Capitol, where some of his friends discovered him in the inner room of the Committee on Ways and Means. He sat in one of the large, heavily cushioned chairs and looked pale and weary. The President's message was just being read in the House, and one of the members coming from the floor repeated a highly colored phrase about the result of our Philippine policy. Reed's eyes flashed and he said with his old fire, "I suppose he put that there for the same reason that they put tails on coats, — for the benefit of the lackeys." And he then proceeded with a witty little discourse on the uses of coat-tails, and their value to lackeys who would have something to brush. He was soon surrounded by a group of his old friends and he seemed to take a good deal of pleasure in the talk. One of them read from a newspaper that he happened to have some of Reed's jokes at the Mark Twain dinner, and Reed joined in the laugh which followed.

He complained of not feeling well. He went from the Committee room to the Senate end of the Capitol, where he talked with other friends. He was seen to sink

into a chair and complained of sharp pains. "I am sick," he said, "and ought to be in bed this minute."

Those who were with him were alarmed at his condition, which seemed at the moment very serious. Soon he rallied and was taken to his hotel. His physicians decided that he was suffering from appendicitis, and an advanced case of disease of the kidneys. The former ailment appeared to be an incident and not a primary factor, and its symptoms soon subsided.[1] But with the exception of a slight temporary check now and then, the kidney disease proceeded steadily. One of the attending physicians subsequently expressed the opinion that Reed had had chronic Bright's disease for years and that its violent form was precipitated by the attack of appendicitis.[2] His wife and daughter were summoned to Washington. For much of the time he was unconscious or wholly or partially delirious. In his moments of delirium he would astonish his physicians by the sententious and dignified manner in which he would argue with them against the administration of remedies. "If unfair, then I apologize," he explained when told by one of the doctors that he might have been unfair in a decision. Again: "If you have repented of your action we will consider that phase of the case." After a remedy had been given him he broke out: "Doctor, you have no legal right to do that. It is the third time you have taken the liberty. I will

[1] See "Brief Report of the Last Illness of the Hon. Thomas B. Reed" by one of his physicians, T. L. MacDonald, M.D.

[2] Washington *Post*, Dec. 8, 1902.

have you understand that the citizen is not obliged to submit to the dictation of the man with the hoe."

Thus his two or three remaining days wore away with unconsciousness and delirium alternating, and with only a rare glimpse upon the world as he had known it. By Saturday, December 6, his condition became very grave. Late in the evening of that day his delirium began to abate, and he sank into a peaceful sleep, out of which at midnight he passed into another world.

Over the road on which he had so often journeyed to and fro between Portland and the country's Capitol they brought him home again for all time. He was placed in the Evergreen Cemetery, in which his young son and his father and mother were buried, and where in 1914, in the springtime, his wife was laid beside him. Upon the most beautiful promenade of the city, near the crest of a hill, a statue of him was reared by popular subscription, and was unveiled by his young grandson, Thomas Reed Balentine. The figure, giant-like and majestic, seeming hardly larger than life to those who knew him, stands silhouetted against the sky, as if to typify the high background against which the deeds of his public life shine. About its base, upon a summer's day, the barefoot boys of Portland may be seen playing, just as he played near the same spot in his own boyhood, perchance waging mimic wars against the "warlike tribes" on Munjoy Hill.

THE END

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